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In the Last Days

By ALICE EVELINE LUCE

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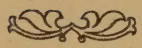
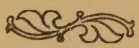
The Little Flock in the Last Days

By

ALICE EVELINE LUCE



This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 2 Tim. 3:1; Luke 12:32.



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FOREWORD

This book is not an exposition of prophecy, nor yet a study of social or of international conditions in the twentieth century. Far abler pens have written ample food for thought along those lines, and many suggestive articles are continually coming out in the religious and the secular papers. This is rather an attempt to gather some spiritual food which may be "meat in due season" for the Lord's children who are hungry for His best, and who find themselves in places of spiritual famine.

These "last days" are the time when the great enemy of souls is rallying all his forces to attack the church of Christ. With the experience of well-nigh six thousand years behind him, and the knowledge of certain doom before, he is bent on finding out the weak places in the church's lines of defense, the joints in her armor or the wavering ones among her soldiers, to the end that he may work the greatest possible havoc during the short time that yet remains to him. "The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Rev. 12:12.

One of his most subtle devices is to get Christians so taken up with the study of prophecy, with the details of its interpretation or with supposed errors in what others say or write, that they forget the most important thing of all, viz., to get ready themselves

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for the Coming of the Lord. It is far more important to have our loins girded and lamps burning brightly, well supplied with the oil of the Holy Spirit, than it is to be sure whether Antichrist will come out of Greece or Syria, or even whether he will be Jew or Gentile, interesting though these points may be. With this thought in view I have tried to avoid controversial points in this book, seeking to place before my readers only the plain, unvarnished statements of Scripture concerning the "last days" of this dispensation and some of their most evident fulfillments in curent events.

My aim throughout has been to stir up my readers as well as myself to obey the command: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." Luke 12:35, 36.

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Rom. 13:11-14.

The title of *Shepherd* is one of the most tender and loving used of our Lord Jesus Christ; especially when we remember the relation between an oriental shepherd and his sheep, which is so different from anything known in Western lands. The Palestine shepherd

knows the name of every individual member of his flock; he walks with them by day and sleeps near them by night; he leads them to the choicest pasture lands and beside the rivers of still waters where they may quench their thirst. He carries ever a rod to guide and correct them, and a stout staff to fight the robbers or beasts of prey which may attack them. In these and a thousand other points our blessed Lord is the loving, tender Shepherd of His people; and He has made the supreme sacrifice for them in laying down His life in their stead.

How suitable also is the metaphor of *sheep* as applied to the Christian! Slow, helpless, stupid, senseless, prone to wander, with a faculty for following the crowd in the wrong pathway—it seems just as hard to find anything to admire in a sheep as in my own heart or character. Have you not often felt like that, dear reader? It is surely the experience of the whole human race that "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." But the verse does not end there, thank God, or it would have fared ill with all of us, as our own way would never have led us back to the Fold of God. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." In spite of all our wanderings and backslidings, our stupidity and uselessness, our Good Shepherd did not cease to love us, but He gave us the greatest proof of His love in taking upon Him all our sins and in laying down His life as an atoning sacrifice on Calvary's cross.

Dear reader, have you realized your lost condition and been found by the Good Shepherd? Have you confessed your sins and put them all beneath the cleansing stream of His precious Blood? Will you not do so

now, if you have never done so before? Thus you may at once receive the joy and peace that come from sins forgiven and a heart at rest. If you will but open your heart's door to Jesus, He will come in and sup with you; His Holy Spirit will work in you the great change which is described as the New Birth, making you a child of God; to revert to the metaphor, the lost sheep will have been found by the seeking Shepherd and will rejoice once more to be safe within His heavenly Fold.

This book is addressed to those who were once lost sheep but are now *found sheep,* following the Shepherd, loving His voice, and resting in His Fold. They are still *sheep,* and have nothing in themselves to fit them for the work which lies before them. This is the glorious paradox of Christ's service: "When I am weak, then am I strong." He who has found us and brought us home rejoicing, undertakes to carry us to the end of the journey and to provide us with all that we need as we go forth to work for Him. The pathway is full of dangers, seen and unseen; wolves, robbers and other enemies abound on every side: yet amid them all the Lord's sheep can go on fearlessly, if they are only humble enough to lean entirely upon HIM for guidance, strength, wisdom, protection and all that they need.

" 'Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.' Luke 9:1, 2. A distinct commission for a ministry of distinction. Power and authority over all varieties of demons, high, low, or any other class; and also to heal diseases.

Christ was passing on to them part of the qualifications that the Spirit foretold would be in His own ministry.

" 'When even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils; and *he cast out the spirits with his word,* and healed all that were sick.' Matt. 8:16. He dealt with first causes first, realizing this of the greatest importance. His commission was in the same order. And so He says: 'I give you power and authority over all demons.' Disciples, fishermen—a peculiar lot, a most unlikely band—nay, He calls them sheep in the midst of wolves: yet these are the commissioned ones.

"That is always God's way. You say, 'Sheep to fight wolves? Absurd! Why the wolves will eat the sheep. They are fond of sheep.' *A sheep with a divine commission is equal to and more than a match for a wolf with a hellish commission.*

"Christ said, 'I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.' But the Great Shepherd is behind, directing. The seventy came back and reported. No, they were not swallowed up. The wolves did not devour them, but the wolves were scattered. The disciples reported: 'Even the demons were subject unto us through thy name.' The divine Shepherd was behind, watching. He said, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall.' He saw the angels of light, the transformed demons, going down into the pit.

" 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall,' through the agency of the sheep. Wonder of wonders! And then He warns them: 'Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.' Don't lose your sheep nature because you have overcome the wolves. Rejoice that

your names are written down. Rejoice that you are still a lamb in the Fold. If you change your nature, become independent of the Shepherd, the wolf will surely catch you. Dependence on Him gives you independence of them.

" 'I give you power and authority over all demons.' A Magna Charta from heaven giving the children of God their rights over the tyrant, the prince of the power of the air, and his hosts. And so the children of the King of kings, who have been slaves to the tyrant, can have their freedom. This commission is equal to, and parallel with, that of healing the sick. 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and *healing all that were oppressed of the devil.*' There the two are interwoven into one. Oppressed, depressed by the demon power, under the great head.

"They were amazed that Christ with authority commanded the demons to come out. He says, 'Go ye into all the world. I have all power. Teach them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you. These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out demons. And nothing shall by any means hurt you.' The commission to go is coupled with the promise of protection. The twelve returned, the seventy returned, and they had not a scratch on their faces, no marks of violence on their bodies, and no defeat to report. They were told not to boast, because they received their commission from their Savior, their Leader, and all credit was due to Him and should be given to Him.

" 'Nothing shall by any means hurt you.' A statement, a truth to be relied upon, believed in, just as

much as the command to *go* and *do*. The need is as great to-day. The commission is as fresh to-day and as powerful. The results can be equal to, and the protection as valid as, that of old. You say, 'Oh, yes! it was for the twelve and for the seventy and nobody else! Are you a believer? These signs shall follow *them that believe*: In My Name, not in your own; in My Name, not your power; in My Name, not your determination; in My Name, not your willingness; in My Name, not your insight; in My Name, not your discernment—they shall cast out demons. If the commission was real, the demons are just as real, and they have to be dealt with.

"You say, 'Oh, but that does not apply to these days.' He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; does that apply to these days? The invitation for salvation applies to-day. The command to act applies to-day. You say, 'But I am afraid.' Then you don't believe. You say, 'They are more than a match for me.' Of course they are—but not for HIM. You say, 'I don't understand.' The Spirit will lead you and teach you. 'I am afraid to venture.' So were those sheep; but they came back rejoicing that they had met the wolves and the wolves ran away. He knows you are weak. He calls you sheep. We should have commissioned lions to meet the wolves. He commissioned sheep. He takes the weak things to confound the mighty.

"Sheep meeting wolves! who ever heard of it? You say, 'Oh, yes, we could put the sheep in wolves' clothing.' No, no, no! Sheep in sheep's clothing to meet wolves in wolves' clothing; and the bloodthirsty jaws of the wolves were paralyzed in the presence of divinely equipped, commissioned sheep.

"Do you want to be a sheep? Believe the commission, believe the statement, and you can go forth to do that which is said should be done by those who believe."

May the Lord help us to take our place among the Lord's helpless sheep, and to follow Him without fear, knowing that He who has given us this great commission to be carried out in the short time that yet remains to us before He comes again, will work in and through us of His good pleasure as we yield to His Spirit's power. That the pages which follow may be used by the Great Shepherd to encourage some of His timid sheep to believe Him for the promised signs to follow in their ministry, is my earnest prayer; and to Him shall be all the glory.

ALICE E. LUCE

Manhattan Beach, Calif., U. S. A.
April 9, 1927.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I
Christ's Messenger and His Work 15

CHAPTER II
Signs of the Appearing of the Chief Shepherd 30

CHAPTER III
The Budding of the Fig Tree 49

CHAPTER IV
Signs of Summer in All the Trees 73

CHAPTER V
The Latter-Rain Outpouring 89

CHAPTER VI
Sweetness and Suffering 108

CHAPTER VII
Watchers with Anointed Eyes 120

CHAPTER VIII
Anoint the Shield 130

CHAPTER IX
The Days of Noah and Lot 142

CHAPTER X
Samson the Nazarite 163

CHAPTER XI
The Great High Priest's Last Letter 172

CHAPTER XII
Let Us Hold Fast 193

Appendix 214

CHAPTER I

Christ's Messenger and His Work

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." Mal. 3:1. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth: and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Luke 3:4-6. "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:17.

These words were spoken of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In oriental countries every king or noble used to send a "forerunner" before him on his journeys to prepare every detail of his reception; and very often this would include the making of good roads along which the royal chariot could pass with comfort. So the metaphor would be very familiar in Bible lands, and the people who first read these verses would easily understand their spiritual significance, and how John came to make ready a highway in the hearts of his hearers, a pathway for the Lord Jesus to enter and take possession of their hearts and lives.

We are now expecting the Saviour in His Second Coming, first to catch away His own for the marriage of the Lamb in glory, and then to return with all His saints to the earth, to destroy the Antichrist and his

hosts, and to set up His kingdom of righteousness and peace over this sin-blighted earth. And He is seeking for messengers whom He can send before His face to prepare a way for Him in the hearts of the people, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

As in the days of John the Baptist, the fathers have to be softened and become as little children, and the disobedient have to be led captive to the feet of Jesus to receive the "wisdom of the just"—that perfect robe of Christ's righteousness, bestowed freely upon all who believe in Him. There are still valleys to be filled —things that are lacking, defects in character, and void places which Jesus alone can fill. Yes, and there are mountains and hills to be brought low—those high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, such as pride, self-confidence, leaning to our own understanding, and especially the many high *thoughts* which have to be brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ. Then in many a heart and life there are "crooked places" of guile, hypocrisy or unconscious subterfuge to be made straight by the Spirit's power; and "rough ways" of assertiveness, lack of courtesy or brusqueness which the Comforter alone can make smooth by imparting the meekness and gentleness of Christ. These words are addressed to the Lord's servants, to those who have been saved themselves and then sent forth to save others.

Beloved, there is a great work to be done in these last days before our Master returns; and the time for doing it is very short. One of the greatest devices of the enemy now is to put a spirit of slumber upon us, perhaps to get us so taken up with our own enjoyment of spiritual blessings and gifts that we neglect the work

of soul-saving for which the Lord has left us down here in this world. Jesus is seeking a band of overcomers who will be His messengers to a lost world. He desires to send forth every saved child of His to prepare a pathway for Him in other hearts, and thus to get them ready for His Coming. In the light of the fulfillment of prophecy, of the crying need of millions in darkness and of the momentous happenings all around us, let us awake to our high calling, let us shake off our slothfulness and ease, and come to the help of the Lord against the mighty! He is still crying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Let the response go forth from every heart: "Here am I, Lord; send me!"

If we study the life and character of John the Baptist, we shall see what is involved in being a messenger of the Lord, and what it means to prepare His way in the hearts of others.

I. John Was a Pilgrim

His parents Zacharias and Elizabeth had a home where he was always welcome; but John was called to be a "sign" to the people, like Ezekiel before him, and so there was no human companionship, no happy home life for him. Far away in the silent desert where the wild beasts prowl around, did the Spirit of God call him. There he lived in the simplest clothing—a leather girdle over a long garment of camel's hair, such as the poorest of the people used to wear, probably woven by his mother's loving hands. He drank the pure water of the rocky rills, and ate the wild honey with which that region abounded, also the fruit of the "locust tree," or carob, a common shrub in the Jordan valley. There in the solitude and stillness "the word of the Lord came

unto John"; and that was the secret of his wonderful ministry. God takes infinite pains with a man in whom He sees infinite possibilities. Everything is subservient to the one great object: that the will of the Lord may be revealed and the messenger thus prepared for his work.

Now the Lord does not call us in these days to leave our homes and dwell in the desert. All the teaching of other parts of Scripture shows us that it is a far higher ideal to live as Jesus did, mingling with men, sharing their joys and sorrows, all the time pointing them heavenward, as "*in* the world, yet not *of* the world." Why then was this picture of John the Baptist set before us as Christ's ideal for His messengers who would prepare the way for His Second Coming? Surely it is a *spiritual* lesson of supreme importance, especially in these days of ease and luxury, even among those who name the Name of Christ. The only way to be a true messenger of His is to have the *pilgrim spirit*. There must be a separation from everything that hinders us from hearing the still, small voice. It may be we shall have to give up some of our luxuries, and dress more simply; we may have to retire earlier at night in order to rise in the morning to listen to the voice of the Spirit; doubtless we shall be separated from those of our friends who would hinder us from going all the way with God; and all worldly habits and amusements will have to be laid aside. We need not trouble ourselves about the working out of the details, for the Holy Spirit will guide us in them step by step. The all-important thing for us is to yield unreservedly to the blessed Comforter and ask Him to *put the pilgrim spirit in us;* and to make us utterly and irrevoca-

bly willing to let go of everything that would hinder us from hearing His voice and getting His guidance in our work.

II. John Was a Pioneer

He lived in an age of spiritual degeneration, deadness and decadence. There was much religiousness, pride and formality, but very little spiritual life. To the lonely priest living in communion with God among the desert crags, the vast religious system with its minute regulations for every detail of ceremonial life, seemed nothing but a bubble, a hollow sham, because all the works were done to be seen of men, with no real fear of God behind them. When he saw the Pharisees and Sadducees that had come to his baptism, he cried: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" There was no time-serving, no fear of man and no sycophancy in John. He feared his God so much that he feared no one else; and he boldly denounced the sins and unmasked the hypocrisy of all who came to hear him.

Such men of courage are needed in these days, and they are the only true pioneers. Some one has said that the three essential qualifications of a leader are: (1) He must know the way; (2) He must be willing to go ahead; and (3) He must be able to get others to follow him. How fully we see these exemplified in John the Baptist. He knew that he was preparing the way for the Christ, and the burden of his cry was, "He must increase, but I must decrease." With no uncertain sound he held up the Christ, the Coming One, and led all his hearers towards Him. He was not afraid to go ahead either. The proud scorn of the rulers or the rough jests of the mob never moved

him one hair's breadth from his heavenward path. And the people followed him. "There went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." In that humble ascetic they recognized the messenger of God, and the Voice went home to their hearts.

III. John Was a Prophet

There is no clearer illustration of the preaching of the full Gospel than we find in his teaching: and it is all the more remarkable since he lived and preached before the coming of Christ and before Pentecost. The New Testament prophet is one who *tells forth* God's message to men under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and well does this description apply to John. His preaching was fearless, straight and true, full of the eternal verities of the Gospel, and at the same time entering into the practical details of daily life. Let us look at some of the points in his preaching.

1. He lifted up Christ. "There cometh one mightier than I after me." Mark 1:7. "That he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And looking upon Jesus as he walked he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." John 1:31-37. That is the true test of a prophet: if his ministry is really in the power of the Holy Spirit, when people hear him preach they will be drawn not only to him, but to his Master.

2. He kept himself in the background. "He it is who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. He con-

fessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He must increase, but I must decrease." John 1:20, 27; 3:28-30.

3. He preached the inability of a sinner to save himself. "Begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Matt. 3:9; Luke 3:8. This is the teaching which is unpopular in these days when man is doing so much boasting of what he can do. He likes not to retain God in his knowledge nor to confess that there is anything he is unable to do; hence the teachers who seek to please men do not tell them what the Scripture plainly states, that man is absolutely unable by his own efforts to save himself; but they tell him to stir up the spark of the divine which is within him, to leave off this or that vice, to reform himself and become a new creature by his own efforts. This preaching pleases those who have itching ears, and who heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts (2 Tim. 4:3, 4, R. V.); but it is not the teaching of the Bible, and those who follow it are turning away their ears from the truth believing *fables,* as the passage just quoted so clearly shows us. Those who would prepare the way for the Second Coming of Jesus must proclaim the Word of God, as John did, without seeking to please men.

4. He pointed to the Sacrifice of Jesus as the only Atonement. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. He did not merely preach that Jesus lived a beautiful life and that

we ought to imitate it; still less did he teach the doctrine so prevalent among the cults of these latter days that we are saved by following in His footsteps and by conforming our lives to His. No, a thousand times No! It was not the Blood of Jesus coursing in His veins that atoned for sin, but that Blood poured out on the Cross as an atoning sacrifice for sin. Jesus lived a perfect life and fulfilled the whole Law for us, so that as a spotless Man with no sin of His own, He might be qualified to atone for all sinners of the human race. But not until He died on the cross was the work of our redemption finished, and it was that supreme Sacrifice alone which made "a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world," as an ancient prayer very beautifully expresses it.

5. *He preached the need of repentance.* "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Mark 1:4; Matt. 3:2, 6. The devil is trying to make preachers leave repentance out of their sermons in these days because it does not please the natural man. But John well knew, and Christ's true messengers in these days also know, that unless there is a true and sincere repentance there can be no real, saving faith. Repentance does not save, but it makes it possible for the sinner to exercise the faith which does save him. Taking Jacob's ladder as a type of Christ, the only way of access from earth to heaven, repentance may be likened to lifting the feet off the ground, and faith to placing them on the ladder. It is faith that links

us with the Saviour, but before we can believe we ***must*** let go all other confidence and take our feet off what we formerly rested upon.

6. He showed that salvation was obtained only by faith in Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." John 3:36. John was preaching to Jews who had no other idea than that of being saved by their own good works. He had been brought up and educated as a priest, and all that the Law could do was to say to the sinner: *"This do,* and thou shalt live." Hence it is all the more remarkable to see how clearly he preached the Gospel of the saving grace of God, to be obtained by simple faith, without the works of the law. It shows us how entirely yielded he was to the Spirit, that these truths could be revealed to him even before the Christ had been manifested or the atoning Sacrifice offered for sin. It is most interesting to note what was the general epitome of John's preaching given by the apostle Paul about thirty years later, in Acts 19:4. "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should *believe on* HIM which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus." This is the preaching which God will honor in these days—the exalting of Jesus alone as the all-sufficient Saviour, and faith as the only requisite in the poor sinner—the empty hand with which he accepts the free gift of God, which is eternal life.

7. He preached that saving faith must be manifested by works. "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance (mar. answerable to amendment of life). Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." Matt. 3:8, 10. It is faith alone that saves, but not a mere belief of the

mind, which is a dead faith, similar to that which the demons have when they "believe and tremble" without being saved. The faith that saves is a living faith, a confiding trust in the Saviour and a yielding of the whole being to Him. This faith is like a living seed which is bound to bring forth fruit in the life, for that is in its very essence.

8. He preached baptism in water. "I indeed baptize you with* water unto repentance." Matt 3:11. This rite was practiced among the Jews before the time of Christ as a symbol of cleansing; but only since His atoning death and His command in Matt. 28:19 has it contained its full significance for the believer, of a death unto sin—going down with Jesus into the waters of Jordan—and a new birth into resurrection life with Him. It was John who administered this sacred rite to his Lord and Master, who, though spotless and sinless, yet deigned to thus set us an example "to fulfil all righteousness." Matt. 3:13-17.

9. He foretold the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire." Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16. "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." John 1:33. It is not enough for

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*The Greek word rendered "with" is "en," and it means "in," and is so rendered in the margin of the Newberry Bible. The same word is found in the original Greek in Rom. 8:1, where we are told that "there is no condemnation to them which are **in** Christ Jesus." John did not sprinkle a little water on the heads of those who came to him to be baptized; he baptized them **in** water; in other words, he immersed them.

the saved sinner to be baptized in water as a public confession of his faith in Christ; he is also commanded to press on to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Luke 24:49), which is the enduement of power for service, the "whole armor of God" by which the Christian soldier is enabled to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, to resist his temptations, to cast down his strongholds in other souls, and having done all to *stand* in a victorious life, following on to know the Lord and perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

10. He fearlessly denounced sin and preached a practical religion. "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none: and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Exact no more than is appointed you. Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:10-14. These answers to the eager questions of the common people, publicans and soldiers, not only show the preacher's correct diagnosis of their respective cases, and how he shunned not to unmask their besetting sins; but it also shows that he was fully aware of the condition of things in all classes of society. He lived apart from the world in solitude and communion with God: and yet he was all the time in close touch with the needy, sinful men of his day, interceding for them to God, and pleading with them to be reconciled to Him. God's true messengers will always be students of human nature: even as a fisherman studies the habits of fish to find out how to

attract them and what bait is most successful with each kind of fish.

11. He held up Jesus as the Son of God. "I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." John 1:34; 3:35. There is no room in the preaching of Christ's true messenger for the modern theory that Jesus is *a* Son of God in the same sense that we all are, nor for calling Him *divine,* while denying His essential *Deity.* The three persons of the blessed Trinity are most clearly distinguished in John's preaching: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. He never confused the Father with the Son, nor taught that Jesus is the Father: the more we study his sermons, fragmentary as the reports given of them are, the more we shall note how clear and how free from all these modern errors was his conception of the Triune God, and the office and work of each of the Three Persons of the Godhead.

12. He told of Christ as the Bridegroom coming for His church. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled." John 3:29. "He will gather the wheat into his garner." Luke 3:11. This glorious truth is most fully brought out in the Epistles of Paul, and we shall hope to draw attention to it in the later chapters of this book. It is the "meat in due season" which is specially needed to build up the church in these last days, as well as to awaken sleeping believers to their danger of being left behind when the watching ones are caught up to meet their Lord in the air.

13. He showed Jesus as the coming Judge of all men. "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor." Luke 3:17. This is the preaching which is calculated to awaken the sinner, as Christ's messenger, knowing the terror of the Lord, persuades him to flee from the wrath to come and hide in the only Refuge for the lost. Men say they do not believe in a coming judgment; but when it is preached in the power of the Holy Ghost, there is something within them which will tell them it is true, and their own consciences will accuse them and bear witness to the certainty of a retribution, and that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

14. He preached the eternity of punishment. "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Matt. 3:12; John 3:36. This is one of the plainest truths in the teachings of Jesus, who surely knows better than any one else; and yet it is being assailed and contradicted on all sides to-day, often by the holiest and most earnest Christians. It is a truth which humbles and saddens us, and which we should ever preach with the tenderest love and with tears for the awful fate which awaits those who continue to the end refusing God's offers of mercy. But all the same it is a *truth,* and it is stated so clearly and so repeatedly in the New Testament that we dare not omit it from our teaching lest we incur the curse of Rev. 22:19. "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

15. He foretold that Jesus would be rejected by the majority. "He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." John 3:32, 33. This is a remarkable fact, because in the natural John would have expected that when the wonderful and glorious Saviour came, the Messiah and Redeemer promised from the time of the fall of man (Gen. 3:15), all would gladly receive Him and flock to be saved through Him. But it shows how attentive he was to the teaching of the Spirit, and how clearly guided by Him in every word, that he was able to foresee and to foretell that—wonder of wonders!—when the Saviour came to lost men they would not believe His testimony but reject Him and go on still in their sin and wickedness. And yet he saw that there would be a little flock who would receive the testimony and accept Him by faith, for whom His atoning sacrifice would be efficacious.

16. He pressed home the truth by repeated and practical exhortation. "And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people." Luke 3:18. Here we seem to see the people pressing around him at the close of his sermon, and the prophet going over the main themes again, adding fresh light from the Scriptures, applying the truth to the lives of his hearers, and pleading with them to confess their sins and believe on Jesus. May we learn from him thus to patiently and tactfully *apply* every message we preach, that it may strike home to the hearts of the hearers.

What a wonderful epitome of the Gospel we have in John's preaching! Could a Pentecostal preacher in

these last days have a better theological course than the teaching of John the Baptist? And how wonderfully our Lord Himself bore witness to him in Matt. 11:11; Acts 1:5, saying: "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (that is, greater in privilege, as having the full light of the Gospel, which John only saw dimly, from afar). John truly baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." And we who *have* been baptized with that blessed Spirit, how does our preaching compare with that of John, who was so far behind us in privilege? Is there in us that otherworldly pilgrim spirit? Are we brave as pioneers to go against the current, and to publicly denounce sin? Do we constantly proclaim the whole counsel of God, ever lifting up Jesus and keeping self out of sight? Let us meditate on the life and ministry of this faithful servant of God until its lessons are burned into us, and the Lord is able to make of us messengers to go before His face to tell of His soon coming, and to make ready a people prepared to meet Him.

Oh, to be nothing, nothing,
Only to lie at His feet,
A broken and emptied vessel,
For the Master's use made meet!
Emptied, that He might fill me,
As forth to His service I go;
Broken, that so unhindered
His life through me might flow!

CHAPTER II

Signs of the Appearing of the Chief Shepherd

"The chief shepherd shall appear." 1 Peter 5:4. "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" Matt. 24:3. "Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Matt. 16:3.

When speaking of signs, two lines of thought may arise in our minds. On the one hand we find the Pharisees and Sadducees tempting (or testing) Jesus by asking for a sign, and He answers them: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (that is, the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. Matt. 12:38-40; 16:1-4). He also says to the nobleman: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." John 4:48. On the other hand, we find the Lord Himself commanding Ahaz to ask a sign of Him, and reproving him severely for refusing to do so; while the Lord gave the sign in spite of that refusal. Isa. 7:10-14. We also see how Jesus reproved the Pharisees for not being able to read the signs in the world around, saying: "When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

Comparing one passage with another the general concensus of teaching seems to be that we are not to have the critical spirit of stubborn unbelief which will not believe without seeing a sign, but reiterates with Thomas: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, *I will not believe.*" John 20:25. Yet we are not to refuse to read the signs which the Lord Himself has given for our guidance and for the strengthening of our faith; nor are we to refuse to ask for a sign when the Lord Himself tells us to do so. For example, in Mark 16: 15-20 the Lord commanded His disciples during this dispensation to expect signs to follow their ministry, and when they went forth preaching the Word in simple obedience to His command, He confirmed it *"with signs following."*

Many signs are given us in the Bible, but the one event which above all others is signaled out for signs is the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord knew that it was an event against which many would lift up their voice and their pens, that scoffers would come crying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Peter 3:3, 4), and that His own children who are looking for His appearing would need special encouragement and help to keep watching. So in His tender mercy He gave one sign after another for the strengthening of their faith, and that they might know just when to expect Him.

We may remember reading of the long, perilous voyage of Columbus as he sailed westward in search of a new world. Day after day he scanned the horizon, and bore the doubts and threats of his mutinous

seamen. At last after many weary days of sailing ever westward, seeing nothing but the vast, heaving ocean, some driftwood was descried in the water. Another day some land birds were seen flying towards them. These were *signs* to the storm-tossed mariners, sure proofs that they were drawing near to land. In the same way God's children in their journey through this life, ever longing for the return of their Lord, are encouraged to see on the right hand and on the left these signs which assure them that His coming draweth nigh.

There are four things mentioned as characteristic of the whole of this church age, the dispensation of grace, when our Lord Jesus is absent as to His bodily presence, and the Holy Spirit is gathering out a people from all nations to form the church, the Bride of the Lamb. These four general signs of the whole age are **wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes.** Matt. 24:6. After mentioning them Jesus said: "All these are the *beginning* of sorrows. All these things must come to pass, but *the end is not yet.*" This shows us that the prevalence of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes would not in itself justify our describing any period as *the end,* although we may expect that as the end draws near these signs will appear with increased intensity and frequency.

But there are three signs which are most clearly applied to the end, to the very "last days" or the "last hour" before the return of our Lord in glory. These are: (1) *The Budding of the Fig Tree,* or the rise and prominence of the Jewish nation; (2) *Signs of Summer in all the Trees,* or the awakening of the national consciousness, unrest and upheaval in all the nations; and

(3) *The Latter-rain Outpouring of the Spirit* upon the church of God. These three signs are of such great importance that we will devote a whole chapter to the study of each of them. In this chapter we will look more in detail at the general signs of the whole age, which we shall see are now increasing in violence and in frequency, assuring us that the end is at hand, and the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Wars and Rumors of Wars

When we refer to these as signs of the nearness of our Lord's Coming, people often tell us that in all ages there have been wars. This is true: but has any war ever equalled the European War of 1914 to 1918 in hate, in bloodshed, in loss of life and in the number of nations involved? The official reports of those slain in the allied armies gave more than three and a half millions killed in actual conflict. This does not include the enormous number of civilians who were slain through Zeppelin raids, submarine warfare and so forth, nor does it mention the millions slain in the armies of Russia, Turkey or Germany. It is said that a conservative estimate would give the total number of deaths through this terrible war as exceeding twenty millions. The armistice was signed on Nov. 11, 1918; but even subsequent to that date, up to the present time there has never been one day of real peace in Europe, no period when some nations were not fighting. Has there ever been a time so filled with rumors of war in all parts of the world as in the past decade?

And yet all these wars or rumors of wars, while they are born of hatred and envy engendered in hell, are overruled by our Almighty God to accomplish His plans of blessing to the world, to bring about the coming of the

Prince of Peace. We can see already how the Great War has been used to readjust the political boundaries in Europe, to prepare those countries for the reign of Antichrist which must shortly take place, and to punish the guilty nations for some of their special sins.

"The continuity of the wars which were to precede the Great Tribulation has hardened men's hearts, and they take these things as a matter of course, just as much as the rising and setting of the sun, and the changing of the seasons. Instead of taking it to heart and learning the lessons taught by Christ concerning these nations' fighting against one another, and the portent of it, they are seeking to stop the wars and establish a world peace. The wars, however, must continue until Christ Himself comes and does away with the cause of wars, thereby stopping war. 'Whence come wars? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye bite and devour one another.' The war in nations comes from the same cause as the war in the individual. When every individual is changed, nations will change, and wars will cease."

Famines

One of the most certain and universal results of war is a scarcity of food. Fields of growing crops are destroyed by the contending armies, commerce is paralyzed and articles of food prevented from reaching the hungry people who need them, while the slaughtering of the strongest men in the various countries deprives the nations of those who should be tilling their soil and reaping their harvests. All these and many others are factors which tend to produce famine, the constant handmaid of war. Never can I forget the

shock I received while visiting Europe four years after the war, on seeing the pinched, wan faces, the feeble gait of the older people, the nervous apprehension and the way they started unconsciously at the slightest sound, and the thin, puny children who had been born during the war. All these were signs of the shortage of food and the sufferings which the nations had undergone.

Famines have occurred many times in China and India all down the ages, due to the failure of their rainfall and the consequent loss of crops. The sufferings of the poor people with their large families beggar description, as multitudes of them have slowly died of starvation and their bodies lain unburied, only to be devoured by wild beasts and birds of the air. But during recent years these famines, especially in China, have been worse than ever, for the increase of population is so great that the crops are insufficient to sustain the immense number of people. Governments have done all in their power to alleviate suffering, to provide labor and payment in food for those whose crops have failed, as well as to transport grain to famine-stricken areas from those more favored. Yet in spite of all efforts to prevent or relieve them, famines increase in number and severity, and will do so until the end comes.

Pestilences

Epidemics of various diseases, such as typhoid and typhus fevers, have always followed in the wake of war; while famines produce all manner of diseases of malnutrition. Pestilences and plagues of many kinds have broken out in various parts of the world all down the ages; but statistics show that they have

been more severe and more widely spread than ever during the past decade. We must remember in this connection not only the great outbreaks of pestilence like the bubonic plague in India or the Spanish influenza, but also the terrible mortality from tuberculosis, infantile paralysis, typhoid fever, malaria, cancer and other diseases which continue their ragaves in spite of all the efforts of medical science to check them. The influenza epidemic alone is said to have caused twelve million deaths, and that in a comparatively short period of time. What then must be the terrible mortality caused by these other plagues which are always with us?

Earthquakes in Divers Places

It is said that the earthquake in China, in December 1920, was the worst up to that time recorded in history. Not only was the great country of China shaken, but almost all parts of the globe were affected in one way or another, and about a quarter of a million persons slain. One of the most terrible disasters in the world's history was the great earthquake in Japan in September, 1923, which destroyed Tokio and Yokohama; while the year 1925 brought us tidings of earthquakes with such frequency that many writers call attention to their great increase. One thoughtful writer remarked that from March 2, to May 7, 1925, he had counted no less than twenty-one earthquakes recorded in the daily press. There have been earthquakes in all the centuries, but never have they been so numerous, so frequent or so disastrous as of late years.

There is a distinct element of judgment in many of the earthquakes of the past few years. Missionaries from China tell us that before the terrible disaster men-

tioned above, the Mohammedans in China were planning a "holy war" for the extermination of all the Christians. There seemed to be special judgment in the Tokio earthquake on those districts which were given up to state-licensed immorality and vice. Again in the terrible earthquake of 1926 which shook the Soviet socialistic republic of Armenia, there seems to have been a direct judgment of God. The Soviets had treated Lenin as a god, and named cities after him. It was the city of Leninakan which was the center of this awful judgment. We read: "Whirling, seething earth masses hurled and reeled. With a roar like that of thunder, many of the stone buildings of Leninakan crashed in ruins. All electric, gas, telephone and telegraph equipment was thrown out of commission. The death list was appalling, and thousands were injured. But when communication was restored it was learned that the Near East Relief building at Leninakan still stands, and that neither the nine thousand orphans sheltered there nor the occidental nurses, matrons or doctors suffered a single casualty."

Do not all these things point to the heading up of world events for some great crisis? We have seen these four signs of war, famine, pestilence and earthquakes appearing in all centuries; but during the twentieth century they have increased in frequency and severity to such an extent that most thoughtful men have been obliged to remark on them and to confess their significance. So we have come to what our Lord Himself foretold: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:26.

Now let us seek to answer from Scripture the question, *"Why must* Jesus come again?" We shall see that in the prophetic Word of God there are certain things still left to be fulfilled, some events which have not yet taken place, though they are most clearly prophesied; and these portions of His promises must surely be accomplished by the God who cannot lie. The answer to this question is sevenfold, viz:

1. Jesus must come to receive His own. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2. The Bridegroom can never be satisfied without the presence of His bride; the Head will never remain in glory without the other members of His body. This is the strongest assurance, the "sure and certain hope" which we have in the depth of our souls, and which nothing can take from us: because we are united to Him by an eternal and indissoluble bond. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." 1 Cor. 6:17. "Because I live, ye shall live also. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." John 14:19; 17:24.

This is what we are looking for, and what may happen any day; "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. The glorious event is often spoken of as the Rapture of the saints, or the bride, or the over-

comers. It seems probable that these watching ones (Heb. 9:28) will be caught away quite suddenly, and that the rest of the world will not hear anything. Jesus is to come again in like manner as He went; and we know that His ascension was seen only by His own people, so His Second Coming will be the same. Acts 1:9-11; Luke 24:50-53.

2. *Jesus must come to release the body.* "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:22. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew this body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of his glory; according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. 3:20, 21. Our salvation is a matter of hope (Rom. 8:20-25); that is, there is no finality in it, but it goes on ever increasing, expanding and developing before our eyes. The salvation of the soul is only a part of it: we still await the redemption of the body. Therefore God whose work is perfect (Deut. 32:4) will never leave our salvation incomplete; but He who has begun a good work in us will put His finishing touches to it; we can safely rest in Him and know that He will complete what He has begun. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost, when He takes possession of the *body* and sets His seal upon our lips, is only the "earnest" of our full inheritance. Eph. 1:13, 14. If the earnest or pledge—the little taste received beforehand—is so wondrous sweet, what will the full fruition of the inheritance be? No words can express what that glory will be, when Jesus, our heart's best Beloved, will appear, when in a moment we shall be changed into His perfect image, and made like Him in body, soul and

spirit. All the sin and shortcoming will be gone, and His perfect likeness will be put upon our spirits. All the pain, weakness, disease or infirmity of the body will disappear, and this mortal will put on immortality. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

3. Jesus must come to reorganize Israel. "Partial blindness has fallen upon Israel until the great mass of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel shall be saved, as it is declared in Scripture, 'From Mount Zion a Deliverer will come; He will remove all ungodliness from Jacob; and this shall be my covenant with them, when I have taken away their sins.' In relation to the Good News, the Jews are God's enemies for your sakes; but in relation to God's choice, they are dearly loved for the sake of their forefathers. For God does not repent of his free gifts nor of his call; but just as you were formerly disobedient, to him, but now have received mercy at a time when they are disobedient, so now they also have been disobedient at a time when you are receiving mercy; so that to them too there may be mercy. For God has locked up all in the prison of unbelief, that upon all alike he may have mercy." Rom. 11:25-32, Weymouth.

All the prophecies about Israel in the Word of God have been fulfilled up to the present moment exactly as they are written; and those whose application is yet future must be fulfilled to the letter. This is another certain sign that Jesus must come again; for it is promised in His Word that He shall reign over a converted Israel on the throne of David in Jerusalem. This does not refer to a mere spiritual reign, and can never be fulfilled by His ruling in the hearts or even

in the assemblies of His church. If we believe that God's Word says what it means and means what it says, we must expect Jesus to come as a literal king and reign over Israel on a literal throne in Jerusalem.

This coming of Jesus with His saints will not take place until at least seven years after the Rapture, during which period the judgment of believers' works and the marriage supper of the Lamb will have taken place in the glory; and on earth the reign of Antichrist and the great tribulation which will head up and terminate in the Battle of Armageddon. Thus we see that the whole nation of Israel will be saved; and the Lord will pour out His Spirit upon them and send them forth to carry the Gospel to all parts of the earth, so that every nation may speedily be brought into the kingdom of Christ.

4. *Jesus must come to readjust the nations.* "Before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Matt. 25:32, 33. When Jesus comes to the earth with His saints, at the close of the great tribulation, He will find the armies of Antichrist encamped in the Holy Land and just about to take possession of Jerusalem. This will be the Battle of Armageddon, which will be won by the personal descent of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, when His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, the very spot they had touched last, when He ascended into heaven. Luke 24:50, 51; Zech. 14:1-9. He will deal not only with the warring hosts, but also with the nations from which they will have come, and in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, or of the

Kedron, on the east of Jerusalem, will take place the judgment of the living nations, symbolized in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. The nations will then be judged, and either rewarded or punished, according to their treatment of Christ's *brethren,* the Jews, who probably before this judgment takes place will have been sent to them to preach the Gospel.

5. Jesus must come to rebuke the wicked. "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. And now ye know what withholdeth that he (Antichrist) might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now restraineth will restrain (may this mean *the Holy Spirit in the church,* like the salt preserving the mass of meat from corruption?) until he be taken out of the way (when the first-fruits, or the Bride, is caught away in the Rapture). And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. 1:6-9; 2:6-8. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2 Peter 2:9.

We have seen in these verses how the power of the Antichrist will be destroyed at once by the breath of the almighty Savior's mouth at His coming to the

earth with His saints, and we know from Rev. 19:20 that he and his false prophet shall perish together and be cast alive into the lake of fire. Then the armies of rebels which were fighting against Jerusalem will be slain by the sword of the Conqueror and the besieged Jews liberated. When Jesus takes His seat upon the throne of David in Jerusalem, there will be a wonderful time of readjustment in all the nations, and all wicked, tyrannical or unjust rulers will be destroyed. The strongest expressions are used in the vision of Daniel 2:35 to describe the way in which our Lord Jesus—"the Stone cut out without hands"—will destroy the wicked in all the governments of the earth. "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them. And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain (kingdom), and filled the whole earth." Praise God that a day is coming when all wrongs shall be righted, all the oppressed delivered, and righteousness shall prevail in all the nations of the earth. And at the close of the millennium, or the thousand years' reign of Christ upon the earth, the remaining rebels together with the dead will also be judged; and thus all evil shall be forever destroyed and wiped out of our Lord's kingdom. "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night

for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:9-15.

6. *Jesus must come to reign as King.* "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. He is Lord of lords and King of kings." Rev. 11:15; 17:14. This is the one great event to which all creation is moving, the only hope for this sin-blighted earth. Man has been saying all through the ages that he can run the world alone, that he does not need God, but can get along quite well by the might of his strong right arm and the wisdom of his own brains. He does not stop to think who gave him that strong arm or those powers of reasoning, of invention and of scientific research. Many men are like Belshazzar, to whom Daniel said: "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." Dan. 5:23. And yet they go on in their blindness, casting away the fear of God, wandering farther and farther from Him. "While boasting of

their wisdom they became utter fools." Rom. 1:22, Weymouth.

For a long time God has kept silence (see Psalm 50:21, 3) and let man do the talking, the boasting, and the governing of the world. But the day will come when He will break the silence; and one word from His almighty voice will be sufficient to shake terribly the earth. The time of man's dominion on this earth will cease; the chaos into which he has plunged all nations will be remedied by the only possible remedy, and that is the coming of Him whose right it is to reign—Jesus the Prince of peace. No one but Jesus can ever put things right, no one nation can ever be strong enough to maintain the balance of power, to prevent racial hate, jealousy, suspicion and warfare among the various races. But Jesus *can do it,* glory to His Name! If He is able to change the nature of the lion, the tiger, and the snake, so that they can play safely beside the lambs, the kittens and the weaned child, surely He can do the same for the children of men. He can and will, by His Spirit's power, take all the evil out of them and make them new creatures, living in love and harmony with one another, all racial pride, envy or hatred being a thing of the past. This has never been done yet; but it is clearly promised in God's Word, and therefore it is another strong reason why Jesus must come, to destroy all government that is of the evil one and to establish His reign of righteousness, peace, love and harmony in all nations of the earth.

7. Jesus must come to restore all nature. "For the creation fell into subjection to failure and unreality (not of its own choice, but by the will of Him who

so subjected it). Yet there was always the hope that at last the creation itself would also be set free from the thraldom of decay so as to enjoy the liberty that will attend the glory of the children of God. For we know the whole of creation is groaning together in the pains of childbirth until this hour." Rom. 8:20-22. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." Isa. 35:1, 2.

These and many other passages describe the glorious changes which will take place on the earth when Jesus comes to reign for a thousand years. He will make Jerusalem His capital, and from there the knowledge of Him and His Word will go forth to all nations. There will be universal peace, and no devastation of the earth through war, earthquakes or revolutions. Thus the nations will be free to cultivate the soil and to beautify and care for their homes and towns. Man's lifetime will be greatly lengthened and all sickness will be done away; so the increase of population will be enormous, enough to make up for the terrible losses during the great tribulation and the judgments of God which will follow it. We read in Isa. 65:20 that a man dying at the age of 100 years will be considered a *child;* which shows us that the usual length of life will then be the same as in patriarchal days before the Flood, when some of men's lives were not far short of a thousand years.

The phenomenal increase of population and longevity

will be accompanied by remarkable atmospheric changes, rendering the earth capable of supporting the whole human race without any scarcity. Deserts being reclaimed and streams of water flowing into all parts of the land surface of the globe will cause wonderful fertility, which is described thus in Amos 9:13, 14: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them: and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof; and they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them." What a beautiful picture we have here of the peace, prosperity and fertility which will abound then, not only in Palestine but also in every country of the earth; for we read that the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. This has never yet been fulfilled; so we know that Jesus must come again in order to accomplish these gracious promises made with regard to all nature.

The fall of man had its effect on the inanimate creation, and from that time all nature has been under the curse. A wonderful word is used by Paul to describe its sufferings: "groaning in the pains of childbirth." Now the pains of childbirth are pains which have a definite object; the bringing forth of a new life. Thus the suffering and groaning of nature in this time of the dominion of sin, is not a hopeless mourning over something irrevocably lost. On the contrary, it is a suffering in hope, a death which is only the gateway

of entrance into a new life. Out of the ruin, havoc and misery wrought by Satan in the Fall, God is going to bring something far higher and more beautiful than Adam lost. Man will not only be spotless and innocent once more, but some members of the human race will be brought into the very highest position possible, as the bride of Christ, a partner of His throne and His glory. And the whole creation, though it suffered with him in his fall, will ultimately be redeemed and restored to greater beauty and fertility than ever. Thus perfectly and forever will God defeat the designs of Satan on this fair earth and renovate it to be a fit partaker in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

CHAPTER III

The Budding of the Fig Tree

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that he is near, even at the doors." Matt. 24:32, 33.

In this dispensation of grace God has divided the whole human race into three classes (1 Cor. 10:32): (1) The Jews, or His chosen nation, descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob; (2) *The Gentiles,* a term which includes all nations of the earth other than the Jewish; and (3) *The Church,* a body of believers in Christ, gathered out of Jews and Gentiles alike, whose origin, life and destiny are spiritual and heavenly. We shall see that the three special *signs of the end,* which we noted in Chapter II have reference to these three classes.

The fig tree was used by our Lord as a type of the Jewish nation. Matt. 21:19; Luke 13:6-9. He withered the fig tree which produced nothing but leaves; and this was a type of what befell the nation after they rejected Him. But in the parable of the fig tree planted in the vineyard we see His tender, patient love for them revealed and how He was waiting, still waiting for them to bring forth fruit. "And if it bear fruit, well." Who can measure the patient love of Jesus for His brethren after the flesh? Just as great

as has been their unbelief and punishment in the past, so great will be their consecration, faithfulness and blessing in the future. And Jesus in His last discourse on the Mount of Olives, while talking over the signs of His Coming with Peter, James, John and Andrew, gave them this budding of the fig tree as one of the clear marks of the end-time, a sign by which they might know that He would very soon appear.

Let us search the Scriptures for some of the teaching with regard to the Jewish nation, to see how God has dealt with them all through the ages and what He has promised them in the future.

Why Were the Jews Chosen?

God had long patience with the human race for two thousand years, from the Creation to the time of Abraham. He tested them under the dispensations of Innocence, Conscience and Human Government: but every time man failed and his wickedness grew greater and greater. Then began the dispensation of *Promise,* when God did a new thing. Instead of dealing with the human race as such, He chose out one man—Abraham—and settled His blessings upon him and his seed, that by means of the nation which should descend from him God's promises of blessing to all nations of the earth might be fulfilled. So there are three reasons clearly revealed, for which God chose the Jewish nation, or the descendants of Abraham:

1. To give to the world the knowledge of God. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. This people

have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." Isa. 43:10-12, 21. This is where the Jews made their mistake in the past. God blessed them in order that from them blessing might flow out into all the nations of the earth; and this fact was proclaimed to them and impressed on them by faithful prophets and psalmists all through their history. In Psalm 86:9 we find the remarkable statement: "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name." But Israel as a whole ignored this plan and purpose of God, took His blessings as a right, and assumed the attitude that they alone were the favored people of God, that His promises and blessings were for them exclusively, and that all other nations were "dogs" or pariahs, outcasts from the circle of God's beneficence. The words of Jesus in Matt. 15:26 exactly describe the attitude of the Jewish nation toward others: "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Then the Lord showed the greatness of His power and the overflowing universality of His grace by healing the poor, despised Gentile, even as He did in the case of the centurion's servant; thus giving them the children's bread, although His earthly ministry was not to Gentiles but to Jews, as He showed at the same time by saying, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

This selfish, exclusive attitude of the Jewish nation towards other nations was not for some years eradicated from the Christian church, in spite of the vision given to Peter in Acts 10, by which the Lord taught him that he was not to call any one common or unclean. It is referred to by Paul in 1 Thess. 2:16

as the culminating crime which filled up the cup of the nation's guilt before God and brought His wrath upon them. "Ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus; for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

It was with this very purpose in mind that God located the Jewish nation in that wonderful little country of Palestine, the center of the inhabited land surface of the old world, which is in itself a world in miniature, having every kind of climate, from the tropical heat of the lower Jordan valley to the eternal snows of the highest peaks of the Lebanon range; producing every kind of crop and containing every variety of fauna and flora. In two most interesting passages we read how God placed Israel there to be *in the midst* of other nations, in order that from them as a center, rays of divine blessing and the knowledge of the true God might shine forth to all the nations of the earth. "This is Jerusalem: I have set her in the midst of the nations, and all other countries are round about her." Ezek. 5:5, Spanish Ver. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Deut. 32:8, 9. Though the Jews in the past have failed in this part of their

divinely appointed mission, they will yet fulfill it in the future. The spirit that will animate them after they are saved and filled with the Holy Ghost is voiced in Psalm 67: they will pray for God's blessing upon them as a nation *in order that* His way may be known in all parts of the earth and His saving health among all nations. The light of the knowledge of the Lord will *then* go forth into all the world from Jerusalem, until it fills the whole earth as the waters cover the sea.

2. *To give to the world the Bible.* "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments, they have not known them." Psalm 147:19, 20. "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Rom. 3:1, 2. This part of their divinely appointed task they faithfully fulfilled. The writers of the books of the Old and the New Testaments were Jews: from that chosen and separated nation came the holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. "Remember that no prophecy in Scripture will be found to have come from the prophet's own prompting: for never did any prophecy come by human will, but men sent by God spoke as they were impelled (as a ship by a strong wind) by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1: 20, 21, Weymouth. For sixteen hundred years God was calling the best and wisest men of the Jewish nation to be partners with Him in this glorious task of committing to writing His revealed will for man. Some of the authors were rich and learned; many

were poor and uneducated. Among them were kings, fishermen, a fruit gatherer, a shepherd boy, a captive boy, a tax collector, as well as priests and professional scribes. God chose the men best fitted to write each part of His wonderful Book. He called them for the work, He spoke to their hearts, and His Spirit inspired the words as they wrote.

Not only in the original writing of the Scriptures, but also in the copying and preservation of the sacred manuscripts the Jews have been most faithful. All Christians owe to them a debt of unspeakable gratitude for their careful preservation of the Old Testament Scriptures through so many centuries. Never have the words of any other book been so lovingly cared for. The order of scribes was formally established by Ezra, the devout priest who completed the Old Testament canon (or collection of inspired books). Their work was not merely to copy by hand the Sacred Writings, but also to guard and to interpret them. Young men to whom was committed the sacred task of copying the manuscripts were most carefully trained for it, their work was very closely scrutinized by older scribes and if an error of one letter were discovered that manuscript was destroyed. The teachers used to tell the young scribes that if they dropped or added one letter they might become the destruction of the world. With such patient, careful work as this our precious Bible has been preserved to us down through all the ages.

3. *To give to the world the Savior.* "My kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers and of whom

as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. 9:3-5. This passage is beautifully translated by Dr. Weymouth: "To them belong recognition as God's sons, and they have his glorious presence and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the temple service, and the ancient promises. To them the patriarchs belong, and from them in respect of his human lineage came the Christ, who is exalted above all, God blessed throughout the ages. Amen."

This is the central part of the glorious calling of God to the Jewish nation. The promises made to Abraham all culminated in the supreme one of the Redeemer, God's anointed Messiah, who should be born in his seed, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. How can we ever despise or illtreat a Jew when we remember that our blessed Lord, the Saviour of the world, on whom all our hopes depend for time and for eternity, came of that race? What can ever repay this immense debt of gratitude which we Gentiles owe to the Jewish nation? John Wilkinson, the beloved founder of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews, used to teach this little acrostic rhyme to Christian children, to encourage them to work and pray for the salvation of God's chosen people:

Jesus was a Jew,
Every Jew He loves.
We should love them too,
Scripture clearly proves.

Why Are the Jews Preserved?

We have seen the threefold task for which God chose them; and how only two parts of it have as yet been fulfilled. We may therefore deduce from this,

since not only the gifts but also the *calling* of God is without repentance (that is, He does not change His mind. Rom. 11:29) that He will preserve them in order that they may in the future fulfill their divinely appointed mission of giving to the whole world the knowledge of God. And this is just exactly what has been and is taking place in the most miraculous way. After they rejected their Messiah and said, "We will not have this man to reign over us," God rejected them as a nation, and "locked up all in the prison of unbelief, that upon all alike He may have mercy." Rom. 11:32, Weymouth. The history of the preservation of the Jewish nation for more than nineteen centuries has been one of the greatest miracles of the ages. God could not use them to evangelize or to rule all the other nations in their condition of unbelief; so in His patient, long-suffering mercy He is taking them through a course of discipline which will fit them to be the leading nation of the earth.

These disciplinary measures of God are thus described by G. H. Pember: "Transferring the sovereignty of the world for a season to the Gentiles, He would drive out the twelve tribes of Israel from their own good land and scatter them over the face of the whole earth, for a long and terrible exile. And during its lengthened period their land should remain desolate and in the hands of strangers; while they themselves, instead of being at the head of the world, should be hated and trodden under foot of the nations, and should see their life hanging in doubt before them, and should fear day and night, and should have none assurance of their life. For He would make their plagues wonderful, that they might learn to fear the

glorious and fearful Name of Jehovah their God. (Study Lev. 26 and Deut. 28, 29, 30.) And when, at length this appalling discipline should have done its work, should have broken their proud spirit and bowed their stiff neck, then He would lead them back to their own land, and under a new covenant, would put His laws no longer upon tables of stone, but into their minds, and would write them upon their hearts."

When a great emperor once asked his chaplain to give him in a word a proof of the truth of the Bible and of the Christian religion, that thoughtful man replied: *"The Jew,* your Majesty." And true it is that among all the evidences of Christianity there is not a greater than the history of the Jew, past, present and future. The prophecies of judgment upon them in the past have been and are being fulfilled to the letter, yet they have never been destroyed. Scattered in all parts of the earth, they have everywhere been enabled to preserve their identity and have never been amalgamated with other nations. Every other instance in history of one nation living in the country of another has resulted in the complete admixture of the two races, the stronger absorbing the weaker, the latter losing its identity as a nation. But this has never happened to the Jewish race, in spite of their weakness, poverty and the cruelty with which they have been treated. They have never been exterminated and never absorbed. Hated in many lands and despised in more, the Jew has held his own and has gained strength with a supernatural vitality similar to the muliplying of the Israelites in Egypt of old. In countries where they are not persecuted they invariably rise to positions of power, wealth and influence, until it has often been

remarked that the Jews hold the purse-strings of the world.

"What conceivable explanation is there of the history of the Jews, with their inextinguishable vitality and the fulfillment again and again of their unquenchable hopes, except the truth that God had chosen them and that God was with them? They had no righteousness, but were a stiffnecked people. They had no splendid territory, but a strip of barren, ill-watered land. They had no grand genealogy—a Syrian ready to perish was their father. They were not powerful enough of themselves even to conquer their own small land. They were not united; Ephraim envied Judah and Judah vexed Ephraim. They were not free, but became the prey of nation after nation. They were not a maritime people, for their strip of seacoast was mostly harborless and not their own. They had no commercial industry like Venice or Holland, no art like Greece, no arms like Rome, no colonies like England, no philosophy like Germany. They were constantly starting aside like a broken bow. Yet no power has ever been able to crush them, no persecution to destroy them. They have influenced, taught, pervaded mankind. Their sacred Book is the sacred Book of humanity, their religious ideas are becoming more and more the religious ideas of the race. What explains it all and alone explains it? Nothing but the truth that God showeth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He hath not dealt so with any other nation, neither have the heathen knowledge of His law."—Farrar.

What a wonderful sight it will be when Jesus comes, to behold this remarkable nation, so miraculously pre-

served through the ages, come into its own! It is a nation born to rule, and has been trained, educated and disciplined through centuries of suffering. When its final emancipation comes, glorious will be its reinstatement and universal its power and influence.

What Will Be Their Future?

When Jesus departed from the temple at Jerusalem on the last day of His public ministry, He pronounced these solemn words of judgment: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord." Matt. 23:38, 39. Little did those who heard Him imagine how many centuries were covered by that little word "till." Their home has been desolate for many centuries, and Jerusalem has been trodden down of the nations; but as soon as the fullness of the Gentiles (the Church) is brought in and the Man-child come to the birth, God will remember His ancient people and will restore them once more to His favor. The Mexicans have a proverb which says: "God delays but He does not forget"; and abundantly will its truth be proved in the history of the Jewish nation. Let us look at a few passages which describe the experiences which yet await them:

1. Restoration to Palestine. "Thus saith the Lord God: I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. I will accept you with your sweet savour when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be

sanctified in you before the heathen." Ezek. 11:17; 20:34, 35, 40-42; 34:13; 36:24; 37:21; 39:25-29; Amos 9:14, 15; Jer. 30:10, 11; Isa. 11:11. In all these and many other passages we find the same gracious promises reiterated, that the same God who scattered Israel as a punishment for their sins will regather them and restore to them the land of Palestine, the inheritance of their fathers. The fact that this restoration is already taking place is one of the clearest signs that the fig tree is budding, and summer is nigh at hand. Since the Jews are already being established in Palestine in such large numbers, the Coming of the Lord must be very near. Let us look at a few of the statistics which preve this.

From 1880 to 1913 the Jewish population of Palestine increased fivefold. In Nov., 1917, Lord Balfour made the pronouncement for the British Government that it would do its utmost to further the establishment in Palestine of a home for the Jewish people. From then until 1920 under the military administration much was accomplished for the betterment of the country in the way of building roads and railways, instituting mails, telegraphs, telephones and piped water supply for Jerusalem. In 1920 the civil administration began under Sir Herbert Samuel, an English Jew, who was the first governor general. In 1925 the Jewish Missionary Magazine reported 85 Jewish towns and 43 rural settlements, the population of the latter having increased *fifty per cent in one year*. During two years the Palestine Foundation Fund spent about a million dollars in agricultural development and their colonists worked and are still working strenuosuly to improve the country. "They have built good roads, drained

swamps, thereby ridding the neighborhood of mosquitoes and consequent malaria, digged irrigation ditches, cleared land, and planted millions of trees, so that in many sections of Palestine to-day there are groves of thriving eucalyptus and other trees."

The Jewish city of Tel-Aviv, a suburb of the ancient town of Jaffa or Joppa, is a marked illustration of the budding of the fig tree. In 1909 a few Jewish families gathered there, on the sandy shore of the Mediterranean, camping out in tents and huts on the sand dunes. By 1914 their number had increased to two thousand, and they had a small city with well-built stone houses. After the war they went on growing by leaps and bounds, until in 1925 they had a beautiful, modern city, with pumping stations, telephones, schools, wide streets, electric lights, beautiful gardens and orange groves and a population of over twenty-five thousand. Similar miracles of rapid growth and development have taken place in all parts of the country, notably in those spots where swamps and malaria formerly abounded, and where it used to be said that even a bird could not exist. In such places the Jewish colonists have bravely settled down, cleared the ground, drained the swamps, used the water for irrigation and entirely done away with the mosquitoes and the malaria. Immigration into Palestine is constantly on the increase, the American-Palestine line of steamships makes travel from this country easy, and many wealthy and influential Jewish families now reside there. It is now possible to go from New York to Haifa (the port at the foot of Mt. Carmel) in fifteen days, and from there railways connect with Jerusalem and all parts of the country. Exports of grapes, watermelons

oranges, cocoa, chocolate, presered fruits and various kinds of confectionery are shipped to all parts of Europe and America, and the Jewish commerce is constantly on the increase. Even the hitherto barren wastes around the Dead Sea will soon be humming with industry, and factories in many places are already in operation. The total Jewish population of Palestine was in 1925 estimated at 150,000. They are reviving the use of the Hebrew language and a fine Hebrew university now crowns Mt. Scopus on the east of Jerusalem, close to the Mount of Olives. This has a national library of more than 90,000 volumes, and has called the greatest Jewish professors from all parts of the world to direct the education of its youth. It will probably not be long before we hear that the Jews have acquired the temple area once more, so long in the hands of the Turks. It is remarkable that a short time ago when the Government demanded the title-deeds to that property they could not be found; so this may be another link in the chain of events by which God is moving to restore that sacred piece of ground—the very spot on which Abraham offered up Isaac, Ornan sold the threshingfloor to David, and Solomon built the Temple—to His ancient people Israel. We may expect that they will then rebuild the Temple and establish once more their sacrifices.

But this return to Palestine is still in unbelief. The Jews are filled with patriotism and with zeal for their national home and religion; but they have not as yet submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.

Their attitude may be illustrated by the following quotation from the speech of Attorney B. F. Levy, a leading Jew of Elmira, Ohio, as reported in the

Star-Gazette of that city: "We are grateful that the world has at last given us a chance to show that Jews, too, can till the soil, that we are not merely a nation of traders, that we have not forgotten the land that produced our people, our language, our Bible, our Torah and our prophets, the Savior of the Christians and the Mohammed of the Moslems. We feel deeply the fact that we have added almost nothing original to the ideals of the world since our ancestors were exiled from Palestine, and we want once more to send out from Palestine the gifts of our genius to the world. And we will make good; we are making good. We waited nineteen hundred years for the opportunity, and we shall not fail."

2. *A time of trouble in the land.* "Thus saith the Lord God: Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you." Ezek. 22:17-22. "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." Jer. 30:7. "There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Dan. 12:1. See also Zech. 13: 8, 9; Rev. 13:5-18.

This time of trouble, described in Rev. 7:14 as "the

tribulation, the great one," will take place under Antichrist, the great world-ruler who will come into power after the Rapture of the saints. He will make a covenant with the Jews for seven years, probably in return for their financing his projects of world-conquest, promising them liberty of conscience and the maintenance of their religious services in Jerusalem. But after three and a half years he will break his covenant, and then will begin the great tribulation described in the passages above cited. Dan. 9:27. It will be directed principally against the Jews, but all who fear God will be affected by it; for the Antichrist will exalt himself to the extent of forbidding the worship of any other god but the image of himself (the "abomination of desolation" which he will set up in the Jewish temple at Jerusalem. Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4; Rev. 13:11-15). He will also command that no one may buy or sell without receiving the mark of being a worshiper of himself; so this will affect all worshipers of the true God, whether Jews or Christians, and cut them off from all sources of food supplies or of earning their living.

The tribulation will culminate in the gathering together of all the nations under the rule of Antichrist to besiege Jerusalem, where the faithful remnant of the Jewish nation will be gathered. The vast hosts will camp in the whole hill country of Palestine, from the Plain of Esdraelon to the capital city itself, and the conflict is spoken of as the Battle of Armageddon (or the Hill of Megiddo, which overlooks the Plain of Esdraelon or Jezreel). Rev. 16:13-16. There are references to this great battle in Psalms 2:1-9; 21:8-12; 45:3-5; 46:1-4; 76:7, 8; 98:1-4; 110:1-7; Isa.

2:19-21; 31:4-5; 34:2, 3; 41:11, 12; 49:25; 51:22, 23; 59:17-19; 63:1-3; 66:15, 16; Jer. 25:30-33; 30:16; Zech. 12:7-9; 14: 13, 15; Micah 7:16, 17; Luke 19:27. When it looks as if all were lost for the Jews and their last hope of salvation gone, when one-third of the city of Jerusalem will have been already captured by the besieging hosts, all will be changed by the personal Coming of the Lord Jesus with all His saints.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the land (i. e., the Jews) mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24: 29, 30. "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him (the Jewish nation in Jerusalem); and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of him." Rev. 1:7. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives (the very spot from which He went up) which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." Zech. 14:1-5. "I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son. And one shall

say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer: Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Zech. 12:9-14; 13:1-6.

The Lord Jesus is here seen descending from heaven as the rider on the white horse (Rev. 18:11-21), followed by the armies of His saints. He comes at the exact moment, at the very extremity of Israel's need, to rescue His besieged nation and to shelter them in the great valley formed by the earthquake, while He destroys the enemy hosts and casts Antichrist and his false prophet into the lake of fire. Then will take place the repentance and conversion of the whole of the Jewish remnant, and a nation shall be born in a day. In the above passages we see them gazing on their Messiah as He comes in glory to save them, noting the marks of the nails and spear in His sacred hands, feet and side, and recognizing that He is Jesus of Nazareth, the same Saviour whom their fathers crucified, and whose claims they had hitherto refused to accept. Then will follow their great mourning, every family apart, weeping with true contrition over their hardness of heart and rejection of Christ. Then will be opened to them the Fountain for sin and for uncleanness: the precious blood for pardon and the living water of the Holy Spirit to cleanse them from all defilement and uncleanness. Lev. 17:11; Num. 19:9, 17-20.

3. One king over all Israel. "I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountans of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all . . . . neither shall they defile themselves any more . . . . but I will save them. . . . and will cleanse them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob . . . . and my

servant David shall be their prince for ever." Ezek. 37:22-25. "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:32, 33. See also Psalms 47, 72, 93, 97, 98, 99. God will gather all the twelve tribes of Israel into the cleansed and liberated Palestine. Even the members of the ten tribes who have been lost for so many centuries are known to Him, and He will gather them all once more, a cleansed and united nation, Ephraim no longer envying Judah, and Judah no longer vexing Ephraim. Over them the Lord Jesus, "great David's greater Son," will establish His reign of righteousness and peace in Jerusalem, the city of the great King.

Note that Christ's reign over all the earth from Jerusalem as His capital city is to be *forever*. We often speak of His reign of a thousand years in the millennium, but this does not imply that He will not continue to reign there after that period is over; for Scripture clearly states that His reign will be eternal, and will never pass to any usurper. The millennium is specially cut off from the succeeding ages of His reign, as the period between His Coming in glory and the final rebellion. It will consist of a thousand years of peace and blessing, God's final test of the human race under conditions almost perfect, with Satan bound and no temptation from outside. Yet, with shame we have to confess it, man will fail again, as he has failed under all the dispensations of God's long-suffering mercy. When Satan shall be loosed for a little season there will be found an immense multitude, in number like the sand of the seashore, who will follow him in re-

bellion against the rule of the Prince of peace. But this final rebellion also will be crushed, all sinners destroyed and the devil himself cast forever into the lake of fire. Rev. 20:1-15. Then Christ will deliver up the kingdom to His father, and God will be all in all. 1 Cor. 15:24-28. These are some of the events of the reign of Christ which from Jerusalem as its capital city will spread over the whole earth, and which will last forever.

4. *Dwelling in safety with no extermination.* "They shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid." Ezek. 34:25, 28. "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." Amos 9:15. These promises could not refer to the return from captivity in Babylon, for the Jews were again pulled up out of their land after that. But in the regathering which is still future and whose details we have just been examining, a perfect and eternal title to the whole land of promise will be given them by the God who cannot lie, and they will never again be removed from it. This land of promise is far greater than the small strip of country between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean. It extends from the Lebanon to the river of Egypt and from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, a district never yet fully possessed by the Jews except in the time of Solomon, and then only for a short time. It covers an area of more than thirty thousand square miles; and when the parts now desert are reclaimed and irrigated, there will

be an abundance of room for all the tribes of Israel, numerous though their descendants will have become.

5. Fruitfulness of the land. "Ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people of Israel. I will multiply men upon you . . . . and the wastes shall be builded, and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. And I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you." Ezek. 36:8, 15, 29. "The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim." Joel 3:18. The plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." Amos 9:11-15.

A large increase of population is always an anxiety to a government. It has to consider whether the country has sufficient resources to support the population. Thus it is that the Lord gives these gracious and reassuring promises to His people, that no matter how much the nation may increase, they shall never again experience a time of famine. The configuration of the land will be so changed by earthquakes that no part will be left desert, but rivers will flow into all districts. The ever-deepening river flowing from the temple seen by Ezekiel in vision (ch. 47:1-12) is referred to by Joel as a literal stream; and it seems probable that navigable waterways will connect the Mediter-

ranean with the Persian Gulf. We can well imagine how this will increase the fertility as well as the commerce of all those regions. Then will be fulfilled these glorious promises of fruitfulness, the harvest being scarcely reaped when the time for plowing the land for the next crop arrives: thus providing abundant sustenance for the whole population, however great it may be.

6. *Spiritual blessings.* "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations." Ezek. 36:25-32. This is the secret of all the material blessings and prosperity. The whole nation will have a change of heart, and will be truly converted to God. It appears that all in Palestine at the time of Christ's coming to the earth will be saved by the vision of Himself; and from Ezek. 20:35 (already quoted), it appears that all the Israelites who will be later gathered from other countries will be led by the Lord into the wilderness to be dealt with face to face. He will there plead with them, as He does in Isa. 1:18, saying: "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Then will take place the great outpouring

of the Spirit as the latter rain upon Israel, prophesied in Joel 2, and the whole nation—contrite, cleansed, and clothed with the Spirit of God—will be ready to fulfill their mission to all the nations of the earth.

7. Being made a blessing to all nations. "I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing." Ezek. 34:26; 39:21. "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for *out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*" Isa. 2:1-3; Micah 4:1, 2. The divinely appointed task of the Jews was to make the true God known to all the nations of the earth. They failed Him in the past: but in the future, after they have passed through all their fires of discipline and are repentant, saved and filled with the Spirit, they will gloriously fulfill it. The Lord Jesus will take His seat upon the throne of David in Jerusalem, and from there He will send forth the Jews to carry the Gospel to all parts of the globe. Their dispersion and residence for so many centuries in all countries will have wonderfully fitted them for this task, giving them the power to bear all climates and to speak the languages of almost all nations.

Then all peoples will hear of the Christ who died for them, and will turn from their idols to serve the living and true God. Then will the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. What a glorious destiny awaits the chosen nation of God! The reference in Zeph. 3:9

seems to signify that the Lord will once again unify the languages of earth; so that when all nations are obedient to the sway of Christ, the curse of Babel will be removed and all the earth again be of one langauge and of one speech. "For then will I turn to the people *a pure language,* that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent."

Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, let us ever put the *Jew first* in our intercessions and our efforts to win souls; and let us do all we can to hasten the return of our Lord, who alone can bring to pass the fulfillment of all these glorious promises.

CHAPTER IV

Signs of Summer in All the Trees

"And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, **and all the trees;** when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Luke 21:29-31.

We have seen how this parable is being fulfilled in the Fig Tree, or the Jewish nation; and we may therefore expect the same to be true of all other nations, which in God's Word are included in the class *Gentiles* It is interesting to note how even the original languages of the Bible point to this threefold classification of the human race (see chapter 3 page ——). The main portion of Old Testament prophecy is addressed to the Jews, and is written in the Hebrew language. But there are certain portions of special importance to the Gentile nations, and these are written in the Aramaic, or Chaldean language; e. g., Dan. 2:4 to 7:28; Jer. 10:11 and parts of Ezra. The prophecies which refer to the church are contained in the New Testament and are written in the Greek language, which was spoken in all civilized nations at the time of the apostles.

Let us turn to Daniel 2, the great prophetic dream of Nebuchadnezzar, to see what God revealed to that proud king concerning the destiny of the Gentile nations. He saw an immense image which represented

the kingdoms of the earth, the various metals deteriorating in quality while increasing in strength, showing the different nations which were to exercise universal dominion. We see from the reference in Isa. 24:21 that there is another governmental body, called "the host of the high ones that are on high," Satan and his hosts of principalities and powers, thrones and dominions, who are in rebellion against God and who are continually stirring up "the kings of the earth upon the earth" against the Lord.

The head of gold represented the *Babylonian Empire* then in power under Nebuchadnezzar, who founded it in B. C. 625. The breast and arms of silver symbolized the *Medo-Persian Empire* which succeeded it B. C. 538. The thighs of brass represented the *Grecian* Empire which followed in B. C. 330; and the legs of iron symbolized the *Roman Empire,* which succeeded the Grecian in B. C. 63. The partition into *two* legs showed the eastern and western division of the Roman Empire; and the subsequent partition into *ten* toes shows that in the last days of Gentile dominion we may expect to see ten kingdoms arise in the sphere of the ancient Roman Empire. These kingdoms are remarkable in character: iron mixed with miry or brittle clay. This seems to typify the strength of imperial government mixed with the weakness of popular opinion. It describes a constitutional monarchy, not wholly autocratic nor wholly democratic, but a mingling, yet without any cohesion or real power. "The kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly brittle. They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

These four world-empires have already come, and

the dream has so far been fulfilled to the letter. The present age or dispensation of the church is not seen in Old Testament prophecy, as it was revealed to Paul and the other apostles after the First Coming of Christ. "By revelation the truth hitherto kept secret was made known to me (Paul) as I have already briefly explained it to you . . . *which in other ages was not made known to the human race,* as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets through the Spirit—I mean the truth that the Gentiles are joint heirs with us Jews, and that they form one body with us, and have the same interest as we have in the promise which has been made good in Christ Jesus." Eph. 3:3-6, Weymouth.

We know from history that the Roman Empire was supreme for centuries, and also that though its universal dominion has been taken from it, the kingdom of Rome has never been entirely removed. See Dan. 7:12. Hence we may confidently expect a revival of the Roman Empire in the last days, immediately before the Rapture of the saints, that the way may be prepared for the reign of Antichrist, the "man of sin," the "son of perdition," the "beast," or the "lawless one." He is probably the "little horn" of the visions in Daniel 7 and 8, and in him Gentile dominion will come to its height. He will be the "superman" for whom thoughtful writers are even now calling, for they see that no mere human power or intelligence is capable of coping with existing conditions among the nations of the earth. He will be the culmination, the masterpiece of what man can do in opposition to and in defiance of God.

This brings the history of the Gentiles down to the

time of Antichrist. What is to become of them then? The same prophecy in Daniel 2 gives the answer. "A stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Thus will our blessed Lord Jesus, the Chief Corner Stone, come to set up His eternal kingdom over the whole of this war-torn earth. He will utterly destory all that is of the devil and all rebellion in the governments of this world; and the empire established by Him will be not a democracy but a *theocracy,* all under the absolute sway of a Sovereign who is divine and perfect; peace and righteousness, equity and justice prevailing in every land, because He will have come "whose right it is" to reign. Ezek. 21:27.

We have seen what God's Word prophesies as to the destiny of the Gentile nations. Let us now inquire, *Where are we* in the process of fulfillment of these prophecies? The mixture of iron and clay in the governments of Europe is a remarkable fact in this twentieth century, and this alone proves to us that we are in the time of the toes of the image, which is also spoken of as "the latter days." Dan. 2:28. How

does all this fit in with our Lord's parable of *"all the trees"?* Do we see them budding and shooting forth leaves? Is there an awakening of the national consciousness, especially in the smaller nations of the earth? Are they seeking self-expression, self-determination and self-government? Is this rise of national consciousness attended by wars, commotions, political, social and religious upheavals? Are there at the same time other signs of summer in the greater nations—a ripening of iniquity, an unprecedented lawlessness, a terrorism of crime and a spirit of unrest? If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, we shall have proved conclusively that the Coming of the Lord, the termination of the "times of the Gentiles" (or the centuries during which the Jews are under Gentile rule) is nigh at hand.

When President Wilson made his noted Declaration of Fourteen Points, one of them was the self-determination of small peoples. He showed how one of the results of the Great War must be the liberation of the smaller nations from the greater powers which had hitherto dominated them; and how they must be free to choose their own form of government and elect their own rulers. Compare the map of Europe to-day with what it was before the war, to see how all the trees have begun to shoot forth. This has not been done without bloodshed nor without many upheavals and insurrections; but it has been done, and is now an accomplished fact. Note the new governments of Ireland, Czecho-Slovakia, Syria, Poland, Latvia and others in Europe, not to mention those in other parts of the world. Note the rising of the national consciousness in Egypt, Arabia, Cuba,

the Philippines, India, China and Mexico. Some of the uprisings are political and some religious, but they all illustrate this one fact, that *summer is nigh in all the trees.*

The signs of summer are also seen in the unprecedented advance along scientific and commercial lines especially among the greater nations. Witness the skyscrapers, the recent developments in scientific research, the increased speed of travel, the invention of locomotives, automobiles, aeroplanes, telegraphs, telephones and every branch of electrical activity. Witness also the ripening of crime and every kind of iniquity in all the civilized nations. We read not long ago that the terrorism of crime in Chicago was such that it was hard to find people willing to sit on a jury, for fear of the consequences to themselves if they brought a verdict of guilty. A British merchant who arrived some time ago from Moscow gave an almost incredible description of the open and unblushing immorality in the Russian Empire. He said that it was increasing daily, until Moscow resembled a huge disorderly resort, its parks and boulevards thronged with women who through unemployment had become prostitutes. Well-dressed people are rarely seen on the streets, merchants hiding their clothes and dressing in rags, in order to escape the notice of the secret police, whose continuous arrests have terrorized the population.

We read of several statues of Satan and of Judas Iscariot having been erected recently in Russia. The height of blasphemy was reached when in Moscow a mock trial of Almighty God was held in the club of a garrison. The great leader Trotsky was present, with more than five thousand soldiers. The great

hall of the club had been turned into a Court of Justice. Evidence for and against God was given, speeches made by counsels on both sides, and a verdict was brought in against Him. We are told that the Soviet department of propaganda is making arrangements to repeat this mock trial in other cities, so as to destroy the influence of Christianity in Russia.

Note how great wealth has become hoarded up by the few, the result of the many trusts and combines; just as is prophesied by James of the days when "the judge standeth before the door." He calls to the oppressors: "Come, ye rich men, weep aloud and howl for your sorrows which will soon be upon you. Your treasures have rotted, and your piles of clothing are motheaten; your gold and your silver have become covered with rust, and the rust on them will give evidence against you, and will eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded up wealth in these last days. I tell you that the pay of the laborers who have gathered in your crops—pay which you are keeping back—is calling out against you; and the outcries of those who have been your reapers have entered into the ears of the Lord of the armies of heaven. Here on earth you have lived self-indulgent and profligate lives. You have stupefied yourselves with gross feeding; but a day of slaughter has come." James 5:1-5, Weymouth. Might we not think that the apostle was addressing a company of twentieth-century millionaires?

Another remarkable sign of summer among the nations is to be witnessed in the Far East, in the recent developments in Babylon and Bagdad. Mesopotamia, the "land of the two rivers," the Tigris and the Euphrates, has about the most fertile soil on earth.

Under centuries of Turkish misrule Bagdad gradually decayed; but since the Great War and the extension of British influence in Mesopotamia, it has grown in size, wealth and importance, and now has a population of more than a quarter of a million. A recent writer has said: "Bagdad is growing, and with the establishment of settled rule there will be a great and speedy advance in all forms of civilization. One may expect soon to see the rise of a great university to rival the splendor of the ancient schools under Israel and Islam. The sciences will flourish anew, and wealth will bring such luxuriousness as not even ancient Babylon ever saw. Railways will cross the region of the "fertile crescent" (the narrow stretch of rich soil hemming in the desert from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea) and connect Irak with Europe and the great East. Her rivers will bear a heavy freightage of rich products from all climes, and Mesopotamian cities will revel in wealth and sensuality."

Babylon, too, "the glory of the Chaldees' excellency," has a time of great prosperity before her. Destroyed and forgotten for centuries, it has never yet passed through the absolute extermination which is prophesied (see Jeremiah 50 and 51). On its site still stands Hillah, a town of some 15,000 inhabitants. It is a wonderfully suitable location for a great city, and Babylon will undoubtedly be rebuilt in the future, possibly as an international city, a great center for the commerce of all lands. Zechariah's vision of the woman in the midst of an ephah (Zech. 5:5-11), shows that Babylon in the Land of Shinar will once more be the headquarters of the God-defying religion of man, and of the mysteries of the occult. That is "her own base."

or the place where the false religion started in the time of Nimrod. Forced to flee from there during Persian supremacy, the Chaldean Magi and the leaders of the Satanic cults transferred their headquarters to Pergamum, whence it was later transferred to Rome, when the Pontifex Maximus at the head of the Satanic mysteries, became the Pope of Rome and brought the heathen cults into the church, covered only with a thin veneer of Christianity. But they will once again have to flee, and will take the "mysteries" back to Babylon, to establish the "wickedness" there upon "her own base," according to Zechariah's prophecy. It behooves all students of prophecy to note with care what the Lord has prophesied with regard to Babylon and to observe both religious and political developments in that whole region, so full of interest to both Jews and Gentiles.

Our Lord Himself foretold that in the days immediately preceding His return there would be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Luke 21:25, 26. The sea is explained in Rev. 17:15 to symbolize "peoples and multitudes, nations and tongues"; so the roaring of the sea and of its waves must mean a great uprising of the people, unrest, upheavals, insurrections, rebellion against all authority, and anarchy such as we have seen in Russia and other countries and the seeds of which are being sown in all parts of the world. In the midst of all this, men's hearts are indeed failing them for fear,

and the secular press is full of articles which express anxiety, perplexity, fear and apprehension.

The Baumes Crime Commission which has sat for a year in New York, and which reports that "Crimes of violence have more than doubled in the last five years," attributes the increase of crime to the following significant causes: "The great mass of unenforceable laws, including prohibition; the general decrease in social and moral responsibility; the ease and facility with which persons can obtain the tools of crime, such as pistols and the motor car; the waning of religious control, the break-up of the family life; the modern doctrine of 'self-expression' and the lack of discipline; the glorification of the criminal in the newspaper and the novel; the influences of the moving pictures; the hip-flask; narcotic drugs; and the display of great wealth."

In a recent article in the Prophetic News, the writer discerns the war-clouds which are already menacing the entire civilized world, and describes them as clouds of unparalleled magnitude, clouds of "menacing fierceness," clouds of "diabolical appearances," clouds of "concentrated storm," clouds of "increased expenditure," and clouds of "black dominance." From it we take the following quotations: "Those who are thoroughly conversant with the affairs of the nations, and who take leading parts therein, are themselves proclaiming loudly and unceasingly the near approach of a catastrophe which, they tell us, will be of world-wide extent and of unparalleled magnitude; a catastrophe of such sort and such scope as (if sufficient measures be not taken seasonably to avert it) will plunge the whole of human society, the whole Chris-

tian civilization, and of mankind itself, into utter and irretrievable ruin.

"Such being the prospect that immediately confronts the world, what measures will the leaders of the world adopt to avert it? What measures can be devised that would avail to save the world from its impending fate? Compacts among the nations are but ropes of sand, mere 'scraps of paper'; and no one understands this better than the political leaders themselves. What then? Human wisdom and statecraft can suggest but one expedient in this desperate situation—a *superstate.*"

So they have formed the League of Nations, which is already preparing the framework of a superstate,—just what Antichrist will have when he appears,—a dictatorship over other kings and other countries. What does God's Word say to this confederacy of nations? See Isa. 8:9-14. "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces . . . . take counsel together and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us (i. e., with Israel). For the Lord spake this to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people; saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And HE shall be for a sanctuary." The confederacy is the best plan man can conceive in order to maintain the balance of power and keep the nations from once more locking in mortal strife: but God Himself says, "It shall not stand." The only way for peace to be established and to be permanent, is for men's hearts to be changed. When

all the hatred, enmity and envy are taken out of men's hearts, and they have exalted Jesus as King, there will be no need for leagues or world courts to keep them from fighting.

Another of the signs of summer in all the trees is the rise of the national consciousness and an alliance against the white man on the part of the colored races. Thoughtful men are writing about this real menace, and F. Britten Austen has thus expressed it: "The shadow of a war-cloud in the East is falling darkly upon the hitherto sunny world supremacy of the white race. It is unpleasantly possible that the cloud may be cloven to-morrow or the day after, but inevitably, by the lightning flashes of war. The white man's prestige will disappear when the savage, barbaric millions from Africa and Asia can defy the white man.

"The white man has forcibly fed the ancient populations with the newest theories of education, politics and social customs. He has fatuously presented them with thousands and thousands of movies, showing the white races in a contemptible light. He has committed the crowning folly of leading the colored races into battle against white men. In Africa, India, Indo-China, and China, tens of thousands of demobilized war auxiliaries have been returned to spread the wondrous tale that the white man is not invincible." Here again we see the impotence of the best that man can do, to remedy matters, and the exceeding beauty of God's way. Man frankly confesses he knows not how this "yellow peril" or "black peril" is to be met. But God's way of meeting this rising independence and self-assertion on the part of races for centuries crushed and downtrodden, is to give them the Gospel of Jesus

Christ. That alone can make them wise unto salvation and take from them envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness. When they are in Christ, they will become brothers of the white men, members of the same spiritual family, yea even of the mystical Body of Christ, "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all." Col. 3:11.

We have more than once alluded to the influence of the Great War in bringing forth these signs of summer in all the trees. It may be well now to emphasize one special point about it, viz., its bringing to an end the treading down of Jerusalem by Turkey, which is clearly the sign of the conclusion of the "times of the Gentiles"; for "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" Luke 21:24. The fateful "eleventh hour" was then ushered in, as has been often pointed out. The armistice was signed at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, Nov. 11, 1918. It was then exactly eleven months since General Allenby officially entered Jerusalem on Dec. 11, 1917, and it was eleven days from the signing of the armistice with Turkey.

Surely all these coincidences cannot have been without the special providence of our God, who "never is before His time, and never is too late." He was and is calling mankind to halt in its mad career, to listen, to repent and to get ready to meet Him. The last solemn hour of this dispensation has come, and all the signs are saying to us: "The Lord is at hand!"

A remarkable prophecy was written by Dr. H. Grattan Guinness nearly fifty years ago: "We have noted

various indications in the condition of Palestine and of Israel, and in the political events of our own day, which seem to indicate that the cleansing of the sanctuary and the restoration of Israel are not distant. When these shall take place, when the Moslems, now driven out of Bulgaria, shall be driven also out of Syria, when the nations of Europe, actuated, it may be, by mutual mistrust and political jealousy, or it may be by higher motives, shall conspire to reinstate the Jews in the land of their forefathers—then the last warning bell will have rung; then the last of the unfulfilled predictions of Scripture as to events prior to the great crisis will have received its accomplishment, then the Second Advent of Israel's rejected Messiah to reign in conjunction with His risen and glorified saints as King over all the earth, will be close at hand; then the mystery of God will be all but finished, and the manifestation of Christ immediate.

"How long a time may be required to bring about this restoration of Israel—who shall say? *The destruction of the power and independence of the Ottoman Empire, like the annihilation of the temporal dominion of the papacy, should be as a trumpet blast to Christendom, proclaiming that the day of Christ is at hand.*" And now that this trumpet blast has been heard and all nations warned that the times of the Gentiles are about to terminate, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Shall we not seek to make the most of the short time which yet remains by taking the Gospel to all the nations of earth? As we look out over the heart-rending scenes of this eleventh hour, as we see the nations in upheaval, the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts fail-

ing them for fear, oh, let us hasten to them with the Word of God which alone can calm their fears and fill their hearts with peace. Let us seek also to obey daily the command of our blessed Lord: "When these things begin to come to pass, then *look up and lift up your heads;* for your redemption draweth nigh."

"But when ye shall hear of wars and *commotions,* be not terrified." Luke 21:9. A commotion is not a war. A commotion is an agitation, an upheaval. It is a coming to the surface of that which is hidden. And wars with their after-effects cause commotions. The wicked are like the troubled sea which vomits up, belches up, mire and filth. The substratum, as a result of agitation, is brought to the surface. The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

"The wicked are like the waves of the sea, and they think that each succeeding wave of government will be an improvement on the previous government, and each wave brings up to the surface the filth and the debris that lies in the human heart. But there is one coming 'out of the sea' who will represent the filth of the earth and that which is under the earth. Rev. 13:1. Our Lord said, 'Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many.' These are but the prelude, the forerunners, of the one who will come in his own name as the 'Christ', but known above as the Antichrist. The nations to-day are in commotion like the waves of the sea. And they are bringing out of this commotion what they think is good, but what the Word calls mire. And they gather together this

mire and they build a tower, and say it shall reach up into heaven. Clay, brick, is just solidified mire. And the mire tower is going 'to reach unto heaven!' Man admires the work of his hands. And God looks down. 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.' Then shall he speak unto them in His wrath: 'Yet in spite of man's tower have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.' Psalm 2:6."

CHAPTER V

The Latter-Rain Outpouring

"Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Notice how eagerly a farmer waits for a valuable crop! He is patient over it till it has received the early and the latter rain. So you also must be patient: keeping up your courage; for the coming of the Lord is now close at hand." James 5:7, 8, Weymouth.

In this passage we see that the Latter Rain is spoken of as one of the signs by which our courage is to be kept up, and by which we may know with a certainty that the Coming of the Lord is close at hand. He is pictured as a husbandman, and His church as His "tilled land." 1 Cor. 3:9, R. V. m. Just as the farmer waits and watches with expectant anxiety for the ripening of some valuable crop, so the Lord is awaiting the ripening of the harvest in His field, and longing to take His bride (the first-fruits) up to be with Him in glory. But He knows that the crop cannot be brought to maturity without the Latter Rain, and so He waits with patience for it. In Palestine the harvests were entirely dependent on the rains: the early rain to soften the ground for sowing the seed, and the latter rain to mature the grain just before the harvest. We can well imagine how the farmer would anxiously look out for the rain, and how his all would depend on its coming in due season and in adequate quantity. So he would wait with patience and pray for the latter

rain, knowing that he could never reap a bountiful harvest without it.

But what is our God waiting for? He is the Giver of all good gifts, and all the rain, both natural and spiritual, comes from Him: so why does He not send the spiritual rain when the time comes, and why does He represent Himself as waiting with *long patience?* This is one of the deep mysteries of the Bible, and of all God's dealings with the human race. It is a mystery, and yet not a hidden secret but a revealed one: the gracious way in which the Lord takes His people into partnership with Himself in the fulfillment of His promises and the working out of His plans. The whole scope and sphere of *prayer* comes in here. In Ezekiel 36 we find a wonderful list of the glorious things God will do for the Jewish nation when Jesus comes again. He promises one blessing after another and seals them all with the solemn asservation, "I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it." Yet it does not end there; but He at once adds: "Thus saith the Lord God: I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." So it is not enough for the blessings to be promised by Jehovah and attested by His oath—the two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie—but His people have their part also to perform in order that the blessings may reach them.

There is nothing arbitrary in God's dealings with man, and He never makes him into a machine or forces the freedom of his will in any way. He exerts His almightiness to protect man, and to help and encourage him in every possible way to make the right choice; but the choice in the ultimate is left to man's

free will, and God never forces him. So in the matter of prayer, we find the human and the divine linked in a sweet and blessed partnership. We may not be able to explain with our finite minds and imperfect vision just where the human ends and the divine begins: but we do know that God has *taken our prayers into His plans for the fulfillment* of His promises, and that without them that fulfillment is delayed.

May not this thought then give us the answer to our wondering question as to why God is waiting with such long patience for the Latter Rain? He longs to bestow it, and He is earnestly desiring the ripening of His grain which it alone can accomplish; but *He is waiting for the prayers of His people to bring it down.* He says: "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain: so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." Zech. 10:1. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Mal. 3:10. The windows of heaven are ready to open; there are riches of blessing ready to be poured out, but *the bolts are on our side* of those windows, and we have to draw them back by prayer and by consecration before the outpoured and overflowing showers of blessing can fall.

Let us turn to the Book of Joel, where the Latter-Rain Outpouring of the Spirit is promised with such special clearness, that we may see what it includes and how we may obtain it. Joel may be called the Pentecostal Prophet, and his prophecy well repays a

careful and prayerful study as the Holy Spirit opens it up to the childlike, humble believer. We find Pentecost connected with the last days, with the repentance of God's people and with the Day of the Lord, including His judgments, the Battle of Armageddon, the Lord's deliverance, prosperity in the land, and His presence abiding there. The Spirit is poured out for preaching and conversions. The wonders and signs introduce the Day of the Lord, or His reign of a thousand years, which we commonly call the millennium.

The prophet calls the people to repentance under a plague of locusts which he describes most graphically. It is difficult for one who has not seen the vast swarms in which these insects fly and the awful devastation they cause, to imagine how they darken the sky at noonday while flying, and make a clean sweep of every green thing when they alight. "He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree; he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white." Ch. 1:7. This is typical of what the world, the flesh and the devil have accomplished in the professing church, stripping her of her power, of her beauty, of her holiness, of her fruitfulness and of her ability to feed others. It is an exact picture of the havoc which modernism has wrought in these days of apostasy, and brings home to us our crying need of a revival, of the showers of Latter Rain to restore fruitfulness and plenty to the spiritually famine-stricken church.

Joel blows the trumpet with no uncertain sound, and we may trace seven clear notes in his clarion call to repentance. (1) Attention! (ch. 1:2). (2) Awake!

(ch. 1:5). (3) Lament! (ch. 1:8). (4) Prepare for humiliation! (ch. 1:13). (5) Fast! (ch. 1:14). (6) Tremble! (ch. 2:1). (7) Pray unitedly! (ch. 2:15-17). If every assembly in our day were to obey these seven commands, it would not be long before copious showers of the Latter Rain would fall. See the tender pleading of the Lord who longs to pour out the rain, but knows that His people must first be brought to repentance and earnest prayer for it: "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God?"

When the people obey His call to repentance, forsake their sins and give themselves to earnest, united prayer, God runs forth to meet them like the father to the prodigal son, and at once comes His answer of peace. There is a tenfold promise here which pictures to us the spiritual blessings we may ask for and expect in the time of the Latter Rain. This is one of the marvelous pictures of Pentecost in the Old Testament; and we see here not only what the fulness of the Spirit will do for us in our own souls but also in our ministry for God. These promises will all be fulfilled literally to the Jews after the Second Coming of Jesus; but there is also a spiritual application of them in this church age to every believer who will seek the Latter Rain. This may be proved by Peter's sermon

on the Day of Pentecost, when he applied this passage of Joel to the Baptism of the Holy Ghost which he and the other waiting disciples had just received. Acts 2:16-21.

The first blessing here promised is *Provision.* "Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil." Joel 2:19, 24. The plague of locusts had so devastated the fields that the land was in a condition of famine. And the individual or the assembly that is without the Holy Spirit's power is in a state of spiritual famine. When the heart begins to cry out in true penitence for the filling of the Spirit, the first thing the blessed Comforter does is to teach that soul to feed on Jesus, the Bread of Life. The *corn* and *wheat* may typify all the spiritual sustenance needed; *wine* the joy and rejoicing of sins forgiven; and *oil* the healing of all sickness. The second blessing promised is *Restoration to Favor.* "I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen" (v. 19). It is a continual reproach to the Name and cause of Christ when His people do not manifest the power of the Spirit nor the "signs following" in their ministry. Well do I remember a Hindu woman in India who was reading the New Testament for the first time, as I had just taught her to read in her own language. When I went for my weekly visit I found she had put a special mark against Mark 16:17, 18, and she asked me whether the Lord Jesus really meant those signs to follow in the ministry of His servants, and whether they did follow? I told her in faith that I was sure He did mean them to be fulfilled, and that

I was also sure they were being fulfilled even down to the present moment of time, though I had not then heard of *all* of them. But praise God, it was not long after that when I heard of the Latter-rain Outpouring of the Spirit and received it myself, out there in India.

Another sincere seeker after God, a white woman, was hindered and stumbled for years, and felt she *could* not believe the Bible was true, because though she had sought and searched in church after church, she never found the "signs following," and was told by many Christians that they were only for the days of the apostles, that now the times had changed, and we must not expect them any longer. But when she came in contact with some humble Pentecostal people who were preaching the Full Gospel, she saw the Word confirmed in their ministry by the signs following, and she felt she was without excuse; she believed, was saved and entered into the fullness of the Spirit herself. A powerless church or a powerless Christian is always a reproach, whether among the heathen or in more favored lands. And when the believer seeks the fullness of the Spirit there comes a wonderful sense of the Father's smile, like the bright and genial sunshine beaming upon him.

The third blessing here promised is *Removal of the Plague*. "I will remove far off from you the northern army (i. e., the hosts of locusts), and will drive him into a land barren and desolate" (2:20). In the same way the Spirit will drive back the spiritual foes which have devastated and impoverished His church: the worldliness, the slothfulness, the love of money, the love of pleasure, the unbelief, the higher criticism and the modernism which prevail so widely in these

days. No efforts of ours in the natural could avail to beat them back, and no arguments or fleshly weapons will be found efficacious. But when we meet them in the power of the Lord, with the Sword of His Word wielded by His Spirit, the foes are routed and He leads us forth to glorious victory. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness He did not attempt to resist the tempter in His own strength, pure and holy though His human nature was. No! it was in the power of the Spirit and with the Sword of His Word that the Saviour Himself put the enemy to flight. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall put him to flight." Isa. 59:19, mar.

The fourth blessing promised is *Victory over Enemies*. "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things" (v. 21). This immediately follows a clause which has spoken of the enemy "doing great things"; and it gives us a glorious picture of a life of victory; not only the old plague removed, the devastating sins, bad habits or unbelief taken out of the life, but this promise means something more. Here we see the Lord leading His child on in a life of victory moment by moment. Delivered from past bondage, he presses on to win new victories for God. Brought out into a place of freedom in his own heart, he begins to capture for Christ the strongholds of Satan in other hearts and lives. God never delivers from past bondage to let His freed one fall before future temptations. When we do this it is because we have tried to fight in our own strength and begun to keep ourselves instead of letting Him do the keeping. His plan is a perfect and eternal deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan, to be followed by a life

of constant victory in the power of the Spirit, as we allow Him to do the fighting for us, to subdue the flesh and keep it in the place of death. "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law but under grace." Rom. 6:14. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye may not do the things that ye would" (R. V., that is, ye may be kept by His power from doing the *sins* that ye otherwise would do). "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Rom. 8:37.

The fifth blessing here promised is *Fruitfulness.* "Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength" (v. 22). The Lord has chosen us in order that we may go and bring forth fruit; and a Christian without fruit is a contradiction in terms. There is a twofold sense in which we are to bear fruit: first the fruit of the Spirit in our own lives, and secondly the salvation of other souls. That wonderful cluster of fruit which the Holy Spirit brings forth in the life that is yielded to His working, is described in Gal. 5:22, 23. "Love, joy, peace" give us the Godward aspect—our attitude toward Him. "Longsuffering, gentleness and goodness" show the manward aspect—our attitude toward those around us. "Faithfulness, meekness and self-control" describe the selfward aspect—our attitude towards ourselves and the inner life. Are these manifestations of the Spirit shown in your daily life, my reader? or is the garden of your soul choked with

the weeds, briars, thorns and thistles of the flesh-life, which are described by Paul in the verses preceding: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like." Perhaps you shrink back in horror at the very mention of some of these works of the flesh: but remember that the same old flesh is at the bottom of it, whether the manifestation be adultery or envy. We cannot look down on a murderer or drunkard while we are permitting anger or envy in our own hearts. Let us ask the Lord by the power of His Spirit to clear out by the roots all these works of the flesh and to consume them wholly; so that the ground may be cleared for the Holy Spirit to have His way in our hearts and bring forth His fruit, against which there is no law, either human or divine, for it is perfectly in accord with both.

Then when the Spirit has brought forth these beautiful manifestations of His life, and while He is still maturing and increasing them, He will use our testimony to bring forth life in others, and we shall have a fruitful ministry bringing in a harvest of souls. The Lord does not mean us to sow the Seed of His Word and not reap the harvest; nor to cast the net and draw it in empty. We are to be patient as we work, and not to be discouraged by opposition and apparent failure; but yet all the time we are to *expect results,* because God's Word promises them. "According to your faith be it unto you," is still the measure of our receiving from God; so let us expect great things from Him, and attempt great things for Him, in the power of His Spirit alone. Then we shall have the experience

of the early disciples who went forth and preached everywhere, *the Lord working with them* and confirming the Word with signs following.

The sixth blessing promised to the repentant ones is *Showers of Rain.* "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month" (v. 23). This is one of the most beautiful and most instructive of the many emblems of the Holy Spirit, and it is peculiarly appropriate in oriental countries. There the sun's heat is so great and the ground gets so parched and baked that without copious showers of rain the farmer cannot even sow his seed, still less reap the harvest. It is even so in the spiritual life and work for God: there is absolutely no substitute for the Holy Spirit's power. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but unless God gives the increase all their labor is in vain. It is "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Zech. 4:6. These are the days of the Latter Rain, when we are specially told to ask for the showers. Men's hearts seem drier than ever before, and it appears in the natural that work for Christ was never so hopeless, in view of the terrible wave of unbelief and modernism that is sweeping the world, making men's hearts harder than the nether millstone. But our God delights to do the impossible; and *now*—in the midst of all this dryness and deadness, when the world seems rushing after pleasure regardless of God and the things of eternity—is the very time for Him to send the Rain. The solemn, searching truth which should awaken all of us Christians from our sleep of

lethargy and selfish ease is that *He is waiting for our prayers.* Oh, let us consecrate ourselves anew to Him for a life of intercession, that His Spirit may have free course in us, and pray according to the will of God in communion with the continual intercession of our great High Priest before the throne. That will be the effectual prayer that will be all-prevailing. We may have to go to the top of Carmel in solitary travail of soul like Elijah did. We may have to persevere for a long time to pray not once, but seven times—a type of patience having her perfect work—but at the seventh time the answer will come, the little cloud will be seen arising out of the sea, and the refreshing showers will descend on the parched and thirsty ground. "I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing: and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing." Ezek. 34:26. The Former Rain was given copiously on and after the Day of Pentecost, when the disciples all lived in the love and power of the Spirit, and mighty signs and wonders were done in Jesus' Name. And there is no reason why similar or even greater signs should not mark these days of the Latter Rain, if only the church will be faithful in her ministry of intercession. Let us ask of the Lord Rain in this, the time of the Latter Rain!

The seventh blessing here promised is *Compensation.* "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you." v. 25). How full of comfort is this promise for those whose lives have been blighted by sin, their young manhood or womanhood wasted and their bodies scorch-

ed by the fires of hell. Here lies the glory and greatness of God's salvation, in that it is able *to the uttermost* to redeem the whole spirit, mind and body, purifying, cleansing, removing every scar and every twist of the moral fiber, until the man or woman is a new creation, completely made over and changed from head to foot, with all the old propensities and weaknesses gone, the fruit of the Spirit replacing the works of the flesh. Then too He promises to give compensation for the time lost in the service of Satan; and it is marvelous how the Spirit can fill and use those who are converted late in life and fill the remainder of their days with fruitful service for Him. So do not be discouraged, dear reader, if you have been saved late in life, after wasting many years in the slavery of self, sin and the world. Believe this promise, claim it and make it your own. Then expect God so to fill and use you that you may have abundant compensation for the lost and wasted years, and that the time which still remains to you may be filled to overflowing with fruitfulness, and many, many precious souls gathered in through your testimony.

The eighth blessing promised is *Praise*. "Ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the Name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed" (v. 26). Are you ashamed of being heard praising the Lord? There is no better way of using the breath which He has given you, and no surer way of bringing down blessing on yourselves and others. The Lord *inhabits* the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3); so if we want to have His presence always manifested among us, we must see to it that we build a house of praise for

Him to dwell in. Those who have been saved from sin, set free from the bondage of Satan, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, cannot help praising Him, and should never be ashamed of doing it out loud either. "Let the redeemed of the Lord *say so*." Psalm 107:2. "I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise." Psalms 40:9, 10; 51:15. Praising God for blessings received is also the best way to obtain more. If you have been saved and your heart cleansed from sin, but have not yet received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, continue praising the Lord for all He has done for you, keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus and your whole being taken up with Himself. Then it will not be long before the blessed Comforter will take full possession of His temple, and He will speak through your yielded lips in other tongues the glories and praises of Jesus.

The ninth of these promised blessings is the *Outpouring of the Spirit*. All the blessings we have been speaking of are the result of His work in the soul; and the rain, corn, wheat, wine, oil, etc., are all types either of Him or of Christ. The Word of God piles one metaphor on another in order to help us to realize the many marvelous aspects of His work for us, for it is impossible for any one symbol to fully express it. But here no metaphor is used, but the promise is given in plain language of a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, including

men and women, old and young, of every class and of every clime. "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit" (vv. 28, 29). Peter quoted this passage in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21); so we know it applies to this church dispensation. And as the Early Rain came in the outpouring at that time, we are not surprised to see a similar outpouring taking place in these "last days"—just the time when we should expect the Latter Rain to fall.*

We have truly seen wonderful things happen and they are still happening; but the end is not yet, praise the Lord! I believe we ought to expect a far greater revival in all parts of the world than has ever yet been seen; if only God's intercessors will be faithful in prayer, it will surely come.

The tenth of these promised blessings may be described as *Miracles of Salvation.* Signs and wonders are prophesied, but the object of all is the salvation of sinners. "I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered (or

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*For the historical details of this great Outpouring of the Spirit see "With Signs Following," by S. H. Frodsham, which may be ordered from the Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Mo., for $1.00.

saved. vv. 30-32). Not only will these promised signs actually take place in the heavens when Jesus comes, but they also have a spiritual application in our ministry now. The *blood* is the first essential of our message to sinners, proclaiming to them that their sins may all be washed away in the Precious Blood of Jesus. The *fire* is typical of the Holy Spirit, by whose precious work in the heart the sinner is convicted of sin, saved, his heart cleansed and his whole life consecrated to God. The vapor of *smoke* speaks of the fire consuming a sacrifice on the altar, and is a type of what the Holy Spirit does for us when we are wholly yielded to Him. As we present our bodies a living sacrifice, wholly laid on the altar, the Spirit's fire descends and consumes it, and He takes full possession in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The sun may be turned into the darkness of trial, and the moon into the blood of war, pestilence and famine; but for those who are saved by the Blood of Jesus and indwelt by His Spirit there is always a strong confidence that our God will find a way out for His own, will protect them and provide for them, and that even the rage and wrath of man shall be made to praise Him in the end. Then there will be a great number who will be saved, as the message is proclaimed in the power of the Spirit; and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. We seem to see the multitudes calling upon His Name in all parts of the world, from every tribe and nation; and His ear is open to every cry, and every one who calls is saved.

"Satan has been forging special weapons for the last days. 'In the last days shall come deceivers, mockers, lovers of pleasure, disobedient to parents.'

The sharp arrows of juniper, the sharp arrows of the enemy, are being sharpened for these last days. Is God indifferent? Is He unmindful of what is happening? No! In the first days the enemy was anxious, was active, was adroit to crush Christianity in its incipient stage. 'Seal the tomb, set the guard, and prevent the deceiver from rising!' His work was futile. Christ arose, Christ ascended, Christ was glorified, Christ was active. He received the Promise of the Father, and He sent down one hundred and twenty fires, forces, powers, even the Holy Ghost Himself. What for? To counteract the enemy, to overthrow his kingdom and to establish the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"That was in the former days, and the Former Rain was given to nurture the church. And *now* the enemy, as foretold, has increased activity. As he was active in the first years, and God counteracted his activity by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so now when men are having strong delusions and the enemy is possessing men as never before, God has His counteraction, His counter-activity to the power.

"The enemy is forging his instruments of warfare; and God is manifesting His instruments of warfare by pouring out His Spirit, not on the twelve, not on the hundred and twenty, not in the upper room, but *world wide*—to meet a world-wide assault of the enemy. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. Where Satan is active, God is manifesting Himself in the power of the Trinity to overthrow, to counteract, to nullify the trinity of hell.

"And the Latter Rain will exceed in power, in intensity, in extent, the Former Rain. It is necessary

because of the increased activity of the enemy, but *more* necessary to ripen the precious fruit. Yes! you see them falling away here and there. They are the unripened figs, the untimely figs, and the storm that causes the untimely figs to fall brings rain to ripen the real fruit. You see it all around you. They say it is of the devil before the rain falls on them. Then they go down under it, as untimely, unripened figs. It falls on *you*—the same rain, the same storm—and makes you into precious fruit; and in the same storm you are gathered up, translated into heaven by the Pierced Hand.

"Do not be concerned about the falling of the untimely figs; but nurture those that remain on the tree. Pray ye that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. If you are *marked* men and women by the enemy, you are *sealed* men and women by the Lord, the Spirit. Satan tempted the Lord in the wilderness, but the angels came and ministered to Him. But He ministers Himself to you by His Spirit. A Spirit-touched man, a Spirit-filled man, a man operated upon by the divine Spirit, is a man made a spectacle unto men and angels.

The angels welcomed the birth of Christ with songs; but listen! At the Baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ with the Spirit, the angels were silent, for God the Father spoke Himself. When a soul is baptized with the Holy Ghost, the angels are silent. They rejoice when he is born into the kingdom, but when he is baptized with the Holy Ghost they are silent; but the Spirit Himself announces His own arrival to the Father who is in heaven.

"It does not matter whether men or women will understand the utterance of the Spirit, for He speaks unto God. When God spoke before, they said it thundered. Man never understood God's voice—so do not expect him to understand the voice of the Spirit speaking through baptized saints. They question you: if they did not, you would have reason to question yourself; for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. If he did understand, then it would not be the things of God. The fact that he does not understand is proof that it is the things of God. We are not judged by man. Jesus had no need that any man should teach Him. He was free from men. And ye are free from men. 'Stand fast, therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage.'"

CHAPTER VI

Sweetness and Suffering

We have been tracing the fulfillment of the three great signs of the end: the rise and prominence of the Jewish nation, especially in their restoration to Palestine; the signs of summer in all the trees, or the awakening of the national consciousness and unusual development in all the Gentile nations; and the Latter-rain Outpouring of the Spirit, to ripen the church—God's Grain—for the harvest so soon to come. Now let us turn to the practical side of the question, and ask what is to be our attitude in regard to these portentous happenings? How are these end-time signs to affect us? In what spirit should we live and work for God as we see the Day of Christ drawing near?

In Revelation 10 we have a beautiful vision described—an interlude between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets—in which we may find an answer to these questions. John was shown another mighty angel, whose great glory and majesty causes us to feel that He can be none other than our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Angel of the Covenant. Let us reverently gaze on Him as He reveals Himself here, remembering that He is the central figure of all prophecy, and that only as He fills our whole vision and our hearts and minds are taken up with Him, can we understand

aright those things that are about to come to pass. "The testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10); that is, the end, aim and object of all that the Word of Prophecy testifies and teaches us is to help us to know more about Jesus; it exalts and glorifies Him and makes Him every day more real and precious to our souls.

We see our Lord coming down from heaven, for that is His abode, His home and His eternal dwelling place. In His infinite love and compassion towards poor, lost sinners, He came the first time to save them; and He is coming again in glory to take His people to be with Him forever. And in a spiritual sense He is ever coming down at the cry of a seeking soul, ever ready to run at the call of one of His little ones who is seeking fresh light on His Word and fresh teaching from His sacred lips. Here He appears in a special way as the *Revealer of the Prophetic Word.* The first thing noted in His appearance is that He is "clothed with a cloud," which may typify the mystery and inscrutability of His dealings, which are high above our poor, finite understanding. He veils His glory because it is too great for mortal eyes to behold; and "clouds and darkness are round about him" when He rides forth in majesty to shake terribly the earth. The cloud is also used as a type of the Holy Spirit, especially in the history of the Israelites, guiding them through the day, sheltering them from the scorching rays of the sun, and giving the whole encampment light by night. Thus we see how it is only through the Spirit of truth that Jesus reveals the prophetic Word to us.

Clouds are also used as symbols of suffering or trial, and this is very applicable to the saints of the last

days, especially those who are pressing on to understand the Word of prophecy and to be ready for the Appearing of the Lord. The devil will see to it that they are not without their clouds of trial and persecution. But in the cloud appears the rainbow of promise, God's sure and faithful sign of His covenant with all flesh. It tells of the finished work accomplished on Calvary for lost humanity. The bow is empty, implying that the arrow of God's judgment against sin has been shot. It ever points upward, showing that the arrow pierced not the heart of any mere human being, but the very God-man Himself. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5:19. The rainbow appears on the cloud itself when the sun shines through the raindrops and breaks them up into their prismatic colors. Thus the Holy Spirit of God (like the rain) brings out the beauty and glory of the work of Jesus (the sunshine) to the penitent soul. And when the tears of repentance are falling like rain, the beauty of the promises and God's faithful covenant is often most appreciated. It is on covenant ground alone—blessed with all spiritual blessings *in Christ*—that we can receive, digest, comprehend and explain the prophetic Word.

The face of our Lord here appears "as the sun," just as He appeared to the seer in Chapter 1. This noonday glory is too great for human eye to gaze upon, and the result must be, as it was with John, a "falling at his feet as one dead." This is another requisite for the understanding of prophecy: such a look at that Face like the sun, as shall prostrate us in the dust at His feet in the place of death, that HE ONLY may live and speak (ch. 1:16-18). It is there alone, in the

place of crucifixion, death and burial, that we learn to know Him as the Living One, who occupies the place from which self has been dethroned in our hearts and lives. His feet as *pillars* remind us of their strength and stability, and how well able He is to carry His feeble, trembling sheep. In the Song of Songs we find "His legs as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold," and in the Patmos vision they are described as pillars of fire, perhaps to remind us of the absolute purity, seven times refined as if in a fiery furnace, of all His ways and His dealings with men. The stately steppings of Omnipotence are ever in perfect purity and in unapproachable light. The fire of God's judgments may also be referred to, as in Chapter 1. John saw His feet "like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." This reminds us of how He has trodden the furnace of God's wrath in our place, even when it was heated sevenfold, that we might go free and have no condemnation.

This mighty Angel held in His hand a little book, possibly the same as was seen in Rev. 5. There it was *sealed,* now it is *open.* It was Jesus Himself, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who had opened those seals, thus making plain what had hitherto been a mystery, revealing His secrets to His servants and opening up to them the things which must shortly come to pass. If we desire to study prophecy we must realize that Jesus alone can open the Book to us, and that it is held in His hand. So before reading what any man may have written, however helpful that may be, let us appeal to the Lord Himself and ask Him to give us His thoughts about what we read, and to open

up to us by His Spirit the things which otherwise we could never comprehend.

The attitude of our Lord is most significant. He stands with His right foot on the sea and His left foot on the earth, in fulfillment of His statement in Matt. 28:18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." God has put all things under His feet, and He alone can take that position of absolute sovereignty over every created thing. The sea in prophetic language typifies the masses of the people, and the earth the governments or the ruling classes; some writers have also suggested that the sea denotes the Gentiles and the earth the Jews. Note the different origins of the two beasts in Rev. 13:1, 11. But Hallelujah! whether sea or land, whether democracy or autocracy, whether confusion or a stable government, whether Jew or Gentile, *Jesus is Lord over all,* and shortly we are going to see all things subdued under His feet. He shall come "whose right it is" to reign, and no government set up in opposition to Him, whether of human or Satanic origin, will be able to stand before Him, but will become like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.

This glorious Being whose appearance is so minutely described, now utters His voice: and it is one of almighty power, of transcendent majesty, "as when a lion roareth." He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the great Overcomer, who has fought and defeated the devil, that "roaring lion" on Calvary's cross. The devil's roars are of impotent rage, trying to deceive poor, foolish humanity into thinking that he has omnipotent power. But the roar of the Lion of the tribe of Judah is the shout of absolute victory, having over-

come Satan and all his hosts. It is also a roar of encouragement to those who follow Him, to press forward and to triumph in His victory. "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." Num. 23:21. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, the called and chosen and faithful." Rev. 17:14, R. V.

"Victory belongeth to the Lord. Christ was Victor even in the manger. The wise men worshiped Him, and He was Victor over Herod, for Herod was defeated. The absent Babe brought defeat to the ruling king. 'Art thou the king of the Jews? To this end was I born'—the manger an improvised throne. 'We have come to worship him that is *born king* of the Jews.'

"His life was a controversy between Himself and the powers of darkness: Satan ever seeking to destory His life, and yet He was King all the time, Victor all the time. An inscription over the crucified One said: 'This is Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.' Victory in His birth, victory in His death, victory in His resurrection; for the representatives of Rome—the soldiers—knelt at the tomb.

"He was Victor in His ascension. 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' He proved it by leaving the earth. The tomb could not hold Him, the earth could not retain Him; God raised Him far above all principalities and powers; He was Victor in the heavenlies.

"He was Victor on the Day of Pentecost, when He conquered the hundred and twenty and the three thousand. In spite of seeming defeats, in spite of Rome,

paganism, heathenism, Mohammedanism, in spite of the floodgates of infidelity breaking forth from time to time, He is still Victor. God has said: 'Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion'; and all the earthquakes in hell have never been able to shake that hill.

"Jesus is still Victor to-day. In spite of the apostasy, in spite of modernism, in spite of the growth of infidelity, in spite of the falling away, in spite of coldness and indifference, Jesus is Victor! Not only is He Victor on the throne, but He is Victor for every humble saint on the earth. Are you starting a manufactory of your own, to put forth spiritual weapons, spiritual strength, spiritual courage and spiritual amunition? *Victory belongeth unto the Lord.* You cannot improve on His victory. Accept the Victor, invite the Victor within. He will bring the arms, the munitions, all that you need; and you will not have to go to battle at your own charges.

"Paul learned the lesson. He went to Damascus at his own charges, and he was taken in charge instead of taking others in charge. He became blind and had to be led. The leader led! Henceforth he was a leader under THE LEADER. On his knees! 'What wilt thou have me to do?' He acknowledged the Victor, he surrendered abjectly. But Paul was no abject. Surrender, invite the Victor in, and it will be victory for you in every department, provided every department has the Victor.

"Come in now, Beloved, come in Thou Victor! In the world there is defeat, crumbling, despair, an uneasiness and a restlessness; in spite of the veneer of hopefulness, there is rottenness within. Then there is

antagonism, fierce, determined, resolute, accelerated from below against the Lord and against His Anointed. The Christ is Victor over all, and if His saints have a vision of His victory, they can have victory also.

"Christ *is* Victor: but He can only manifest His victory through His saints who are conscious of and who believe in His victory. Faith and praise—faith, prayer, praise and surrender—make it possible for this victorious One to come forth in His power, to show that He is Victor. Do you believe it? Take time to examine yourself and see whether you honor your Christ by believing that HE IS VICTOR. God says He is; He Himself said: 'I have all power.' The disciples went forth confident in that power. The Acts of the Apostles spells *victory* to and for our Lord Jesus Christ. He wants the acts of the disciples to be *acted out* in these last days. Impediments from the sun's rays reaching the earth have to go before the rising sun. The fog, swamp mists, the smoke screens of earth are dissipated by the rays of the sun. The Sun of Righteousness is rising, and His rays are far more penetrating than the natural rays or X-rays. See that the Christian emanates those rays in proportion as he receives them; and they will dissipate the fogs, swamp mists, and the smoke of the earth. *Shine as lights.* Amen."

When the voice of the almighty Conqueror sounded forth, there was a roar of seven thunders; but John was forbidden to write what they had uttered. There was something revealed to him then which was for his ears alone, and which he was commanded to "seal up." How careful we should be not to tell the Lord's secrets before the time. He often has precious things

to whisper to us by His Spirit which He intends us to seal up, cherish and meditate upon in our own hearts, and talk to Him about; but which are not to be told to others at that time. These may often be things which we are slow to learn and which it takes Him some time to teach us; and for this reason He may tell us not to talk about them until the right time comes. If we tell the Lord's secrets and disobey the guidance of the Spirit in little things, we not only do harm to others but we lose the sweet, intimate communion with Him, and the result is that He does not tell us any more of His secrets. Let us learn to wait upon Him in such stillness of heart and with such an anointed ear that we may not fail to hear the whispered secrets He desires to impart; and then let us be so restful and obedient that we may never divulge that which He has told us to keep secret. Note in Psalm 29 the graphic description of a thunderstorm as illustrating the grandeur, majesty, power and glory of the voice of the Lord.

The next thing John heard was a solemn oath taken by the mighty Angel, holding up His hand to heaven, "that there should be time (or *delay*) no longer." We may expect that the Lord will give to us a similar assurance in these "last days" when the end is drawing near. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come," and the cry of "Come, Lord Jesus," is the last recorded word from the church to her absent Lord. Happy those whose ears are so attuned to the melodies of heaven that they can hear His voice proclaiming that there shall be delay no longer, but that soon His mystery shall be finished, His word of prophecy fulfilled.

A voice then came from heaven commanding John

to go and take the little book from the hand of the mighty Angel. This is the central and culminating point of the chapter, and is full of instruction for us. If we are to understand the prophetic word, we must not be negligent nor passively indifferent, but active and painstaking in seeking it. We must go to the Lord, even as John did, and say: "Give me the little book." We shall find Him just as willing to open it up to us as He was to the seer, saying: "Take it, and eat it up." That was a secret which Jeremiah found out many years ago: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jer. 15:16. Ezekiel also was instructed to eat the Word of the Lord under the figure of a roll: "Eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. Then did I eat it, and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." Ezek. 3:1-3.

There was a twofold effect from the eating of the book: first a sweetness like honey and then a bitterness. John was tasting of the ineffable sweetness of communion with his Lord; and he was also learning, as he had been proving all his life, that there was more suffering before him. This was a time of fresh commission for the aged apostle. He had fought a good fight, but it was not yet over. He had witnessed for his Lord in many lands, but there was yet a work of testimony awaiting him. So with the symbolic action of eating the book came the renewed commission: 'thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings.' God is seeking for messengers like John who will be absolutely yielded and obedient to Him. He will teach them how to eat His Word for

themselves, first making it their daily food, the sustenance of their spiritual life; and then how to give it forth to others, proclaiming faithfully the whole counsel of God, even though it costs them much bitter suffering, persecution or death.

Have you ever *eaten* the Word of God, dear reader? Is it to you merely a beautiful piece of literature which it is well to have on your library shelves, or can you say with Job: "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food"? Job 23:12. It is only those who eat it by faith who really get all its sweetness; and it is only those who have eaten it and made it part of themselves who are able to give it forth to others. The call of God is going forth through His Spirit in these days when the Coming of the Lord is so near, for hungry souls who will come to Jesus and ask for the little Book. Then, having taken it from His hand, He will teach them to feed upon it and to assimilate it until it becomes their very life; and thus they will be fitted to go with Him into active service and carry His Word to others. There is nothing but sweetness in the communion with Jesus as He opens the written Word to our hungry hearts, but when we go forth to proclaim it, the bitterness of suffering and persecution begins.

The devil has a special enmity against the proclamation of the Word of *prophecy*. One reason for this is that it is "a light that shineth in a dark place" (2 Peter 1:19), and he desires that we should be kept in darkness as to what is coming. Another reason is that the prophetic Word tells of his destiny, and of the final doom awaiting him in the lake of fire. Its study therefore tends to strengthen and fortify the saints

in their resistance to him, as they learn how he is a defeated foe, how Jesus conquered him once for all on Calvary's cross; and how the hour is drawing nigh when he will be cast out of the heavenly places where he has reigned so long as "prince of the power of the air." Eph. 2:2. Let us take courage then, as we see that we are on the winning side. Let us go to Jesus and ask Him for a deeper revelation in our own souls of that "more sure word of prophecy" so that we may prove its sweetness and its sustaining power. Let us obey Him also in faithfully proclaiming it to others, sealing up in our hearts the "secrets" He entrusts to us, but testifying with no uncertain sound in the message of full salvation and shunning not to declare the whole counsel of God, cost what it may.

CHAPTER VII

Watchers with Anointed Eyes

"The same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." **Luke 2:25, 38.**

Here we have some people mentioned who were looking for Jesus when He came the first time. It reads as if there were quite a company of them and as if they were in the habit of meeting together and praying for the Messiah to come. It is probable that the shepherds of Bethlehem were among those waiting ones; and we are told of Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, or member of the Jewish Sanhedrim, that he "also waited for the kingdom of God." This expectancy was not confined to the Jewish nation; for there were wise men in the east who also knew that the time for the world's Redeemer to appear had come; they saw His star arise, and they set out to find and to worship Him. If there was thus a band of watchers scattered in all parts of the world, who were waiting, praying and looking for the Lord's Coming the first time, is it not probable that there will be a similar company watching for Him when He comes a second time? Would you not like to be found among them, dear reader? Let us study what is told us about those watchers with anointed eyes, who recognized the

Messiah when He came in the manger of Bethlehem.

The first to whom the glad tidings of great joy was taken by the angels, were the humble shepherds watching their flocks by night in the fields of Bethlehem. This shows us that in order to be ready for the Coming of the Lord it is not necessary to leave our daily vocations and sit on a mountain singing hymns. Many people have done this from time to time, as dates have been announced for the Lord's Coming; but in every case they have been mistaken. So while we are to have our hearts fired with joyful expectancy, we must continue our daily tasks, though all the time "looking for redemption."

How did the wise men of the East (and all the other watchers too, for that matter) find out that the time for the Messiah's Coming was near? It seems to me that here we can trace the influence of Daniel, to whom we are indebted for more chronological data about the Messiah than to any other prophet. To him was revealed the exact date of His first appearing to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The passage (Dan. 9:24) is thus paraphrased by W. C. Stevens: "Seven times seventy years more are predetermined of God, O Daniel, upon thy people, the Jews, and upon thy city, Jerusalem: to bring Israel to the close of her career of stiffnecekd transgression; to effect an ending of all her besetting sins; to purge out of her effectually her 'bent to backsliding'; to bring all the children into everlasting righteousness; to fulfill exhaustively all the contents of vision and prophecy relative to her ultimate restoration; and to anoint the Most Holy Place of her final and inviolable worship."

The prophecy continues: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself (Spanish Ver., the people shall be his no longer); and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and until the end of the war desolations are determined."

The sixty-nine weeks of years (69 times 7 equals 483 years) here mentioned, dating from Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in B. C. 445, terminated in the year 32 A. D. (The prophetic years are of 360 days each.) Devout students of the Book of Daniel would doubtless reckon the date, and would know that they were within three decades of this mysterious happening foretold as the "cutting off" of the Messiah. They would reason that as He would be a grown man when His rejection occurred, they must be living near the time of His birth; and this would stimulate them to pray that they might see Him and recognize Him. It seems likely that one faithful servant of God after another would come to this conclusion after special study of the Book of Daniel; and then they would tell one another and begin to gather together in groups, especially in Jerusalem and other cities of Palestine, to pray, study the Scriptures, and encourage one another in watching for the coming King.

Daniel must have trained up many "sons of the

prophets" during his long life in Babylon. He was in such a prominent position, and his deliverance from the lions' den must have made him so popular and so well known as a man of God, that the godly young men would naturally flock to learn the Scriptures and to be prepared for the prophetic office. He speaks of the men that were with him in Dan, 10:7; and it is thought that Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were most probably among the prophets who were trained by him in the things of God. This great influence would not cease with his death, as he committed his visions to writing as well as giving oral instruction to the younger prophets. They in their turn must have handed his teaching down from one generation to another, and thus a faithful band of the followers of Jehovah must have persisted in Babylonia and Persia during the centuries which followed the death of Daniel. It is not unlikely that among these faithful ones who kept the lamp of truth alight during those dark centuries when prophecy had ceased, were the Magi who saw the Messiah's star arise and who came to worship Him.

We may learn from them the great importance of studying the Scriptures when we are looking for the Lord to come. He always walks in the pathway of His Word, and if we keep there too we shall be sure to meet Him. He has revealed there all that it is necessary for us to know about the "last days," or those immediately preceding His Second coming; and if we pray for the anointing of the Spirit as we read, we may expect Him to open up the prophetic Word to us.

Let us now note what is told us about Simeon, another of those watchers with anointed eyes who were waiting for the Dayspring from on high. We see in

him a beautiful illustration of what it means to be filled with the Spirit while watching for the Lord to come. The name Simeon means *hearing* (Gen. 29:33), referring to God's hearing of prayer. When the Lord anoints the eyes to watch for His Coming, He also anoints the ears to listen to His voice, and the lips to draw nigh to Him in prayer. Those who are really prepared for His Coming will be earnest in prevailing prayer. Simeon's character is summed up in two words: "just and devout," giving the manward and Godward aspects of his life. He was *just* or righteous, perfectly honest and straightforward in all his dealings with man. There were no unpaid grocery bills, no sharp practices in business, no lying or slandering in the life of this aged saint. He was also devout, or devoted to God. He loved the Lord supremely with his whole heart, mind, soul and strength. His was a life of full consecration to God, as that of every Spirit-filled believer ought to be.

There are three things told us about the Holy Spirit in the life of Simeon: First, "The Holy Ghost was *upon him*": he was covered by the Spirit, like a beautiful garment clothing him from head to foot, and so transforming him that when men looked at him, they did not see Simeon, but the Spirit who covered and controlled him. In the old dispensation this enduement of the Spirit of God was given to a scattered few; such as Gideon (Judges 6:34, mar.); Azariah (1 Chron. 12:18, mar.); and Zechariah (2 Chron 24:20, mar.). But when the Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost, ushering in this glorious dispensation of grace, the Baptism of His fullness was offered to every believer, young and old, rich and poor alike.

"The promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." Acts 2:38, 39, R. V.

The second thing recorded of the Spirit's work in the life of Simeon is *Revelation*. "It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." One of the most wonderful things in the universe is the fact of revelation: that the infinite God should deign to communicate His plans and purposes, His desires and His love to finite man. If that were all, it would be wonderful enough; but God's condescension goes even further, for He has graciously revealed Himself to *fallen* man, to the race of rebels that have wandered and are wandering far from Him. To think that God should deign to send a revelation, to pour out His heart's love and longings to this race of sinners, is a stupendous marvel indeed. This glorious, full and complete revelation we have in the sixty-six books which comprise the Holy Scriptures.

We see in the case of Simeon, however, a closer and more intimate revelation still. He was a student of the Word of God, and doubtless he and the other watchers for the Messiah had access to all the books of the Old Testament. But our text here speaks of something personal and individual. The Holy Spirit abiding in him had taken of the things of the Christ who was to come, and the written Word concerning Him, and said in his heart: "Simeon, thou shalt see the fulfillment of these prophecies; thou shalt not die without seeing the Messiah thou are watching for." And Simeon was childlike and simple enough to believe that it should be even as it was told him. He just

praised the Lord and kept on watching, ever with a song in his heart, for he knew without a doubt that, aged though he was, the Lord's promise would be fulfilled, and death would not be permitted to overtake him until the promised Messiah should be born.

The third manifestation of the Spirit's work in Simeon here mentioned is *Guidance*. "He came by the Spirit into the temple." Not only did the Holy Spirit open up the written Word and apply it to his heart, but He also undertook for him in every detail of his daily life. Simeon must have acquired a habit, through years of walking with God, of never making a move without asking the advice of his heavenly Friend. So when the all-important moment arrived, and the Christ of God was carried into the Temple in the guise of a humble, tiny babe by a mother whom no one noticed because of her poverty, Simeon did not miss the sight. He was not too occupied in busy work for God to hear His still, small voice. The Spirit found his inner ear attuned, and he only had to whisper: "Simeon, go into the Temple," when the aged saint immediately obeyed. My brother, do you know the voice of the Spirit in this way? Are you living in such intimate communion with your Lord that He can reveal His Word to you and make the promise of His Second Coming your very own? Is your ear so attuned to His voice that He can guide your every footstep? It is the watchers who are thus filled with the Spirit and living in this intimate communion with Him, who will see Him when He comes the second time.

There was another watcher who was sent by the Spirit into the Temple "at that instant" to join in Simeon's song of praise. This was Anna, a prophet-

ess, an aged widow whose whole time was devoted to intercession, praise, adoration and worship in the Temple of God. She praised the Lord as she recognized her Messiah, and went forth to speak of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. What a beautiful picture we have here of the best way for an aged man or woman to spend their declining years. Freed from her family cares, and with no one apparently dependent on her, Anna gave herself over entirely to the service of God, and was always at leisure to help any in need, to point them to their Father in heaven, and to explain His Word to them. And when she was not talking to people about Him, she was talking to Him about them, praising Him for all His goodness to the children of men, and praying that their hearts might be opened to receive His love.

Putting all these illustrations together, what a beautiful description we have of the kind of people—young and old, rich and poor—who will be ready to meet Jesus at His Second Coming and not be taken unawares. We learn from the shepherds of Bethlehem that some will be poor and lowly, but simple and childlike in their faith; and that they will be faithfully pursuing their daily vocations while their hearts are all the time looking for His Appearing. From the Wise Men of the East we learn that some will be rich and learned, but diligent students of God's Word; and that as they study their Scriptures they will receive light on the Coming of the King and be led forth to meet and to greet Him when He comes.

From Simeon's life we learn that the watchers for His Coming must be just and devout, filled with the Spirit, their hearts open to His revelations of the writ-

ten Word, every detail of their lives under His guidance and control. From Anna we learn that there must be in these watchers a whole-hearted devotion to God and a separation unto His service. They may be busy in secular work like the shepherds, or entirely occupied in the service of God like Anna; but in every case there must be a *heart separation* unto Him. While *in* the world, they are not *of* the world. They live and serve as good citizens of the country where God has placed them; but their real citizenship is in heaven, and from thence they "look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change this body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory; according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Phil. 3:20, 21, R. V.

"Great is the Lord God of hosts. He is omnipotent. He moveth in the earth. He will accomplish His will. He shall triumph ultimately, for He is the Lord God of hosts. Rejoice ye, O rejoice that ye have come into fellowship with Him, that ye have tasted of the Lord that He is good. Rejoice ye, and stand in your places. Serve your day and generation. The hours are passing swiftly by. Let the Lord of hosts lay hold of your beings. Oh, let Him rule, control, infill and outwork His purposes, for great and sweeping are His thoughts for His kingdom.

"Few and evil are the days that remain. Oh, the crash is close at hand, the thunderclouds of war roll up the skies. Lift up your eyes that ye may see. Hide away in the cleft of the Rock, for there alone shall ye be saved. Dwell in Christ who dwells in God.

"Labor on day by day, hour by hour, moment by

moment, yielded, submissive, looking steadfastly unto the Lord. Know ye that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. Ye are to be His instruments, passive, pliable in His hand, with no will of your own. Yea, your will shall be to do His will even as the Lord Christ did. Hide ye away in the cleft of the Rock!"

CHAPTER VIII

Anoint the Shield

"Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise ye princes, and anoint the shield." Isa. 21:5.

In the first ten verses of this chapter we have a remarkable picture of the capture of Babylon by the Medes and Persians. The great city is called "the desert of the sea," for in Hebrew a large river is often called a "sea": hence the title might be paraphrased: the *country* (flat and desert except where irrigated) *watered by the River Euphrates.* The enemy advancing upon the city is described "as whirlwinds in the south" and he comes "from a terrible land." The northern part of Media and Persia where most of their soldiers came from, was a barren, mountainous region, terrible to strangers who passed through it, and producing very formidable soldiers. Just as a cyclone or tornado destroys everything in its path, so the vast hosts of Medes and Persians were to swoop down upon the careless, luxurious and reveling city, sweeping down every one in their path.

Notice the different impressions made by the fall of Babylon upon those concerned in it. The prophets repeatedly foretold its conquest and destruction, partly to encourage and comfort the Jews who were to be taken captive there, to raise their hopes and confidence

in God, and to teach them to believe for deliverance and return from captivity. Thus they knew that the conquest of Babylon by the Medes and Persians would mean ultimate deliverance for them, the vanquishing of their cruel captors; and the news was joyful to them, making all their sighing to cease (v. 2). There is also another reason why the fall of Babylon is so repeatedly spoken of in the prophetic Word. It is taken as a type of the Antichrist spirit, or the mystery of iniquity, the organized opposition to God and to His Spirit, which has been working in the world from the time of Nimrod who first set up a religion in opposition to Jehovah at Babel (later Babylon) in the Land of Shinar. This Antichrist spirit which is manifesting itself in a thousand ways to-day, and permeating all society, will eventually head up in the personal Antichrist, the man of sin, who will be the incarnation of Satan himself, hell's blasphemous counterfeit of the God-man Christ Jesus. But, praise God, he will not be able to stand before our God and His Christ, but will be consumed with the spirit of His mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of His Coming. 2 Thess. 2:3-8.

In verses 3 and 4 the distress of the ruler of Babylon is graphically depicted. "Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it. My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me." Belshazzar was ruling in Babylon at the time of its conquest, acting as regent for his father. Nabonadius, who was in hiding at Borsippa. We see

in Daniel 5 how confident he was in the impregnability of his strongly fortified city. He knew that Cyrus, the Persian general, was even then besieging Babylon, but instead of being on the alert, keeping his soldiers watchful and sober, he proclaimed a night of feasting and revelry. Belshazzar was so confident in the strength of his walls and his massive gates and fortifications, that he threw discretion to the winds and flung defiance into the face of the besieging armies.

Not only so, but he despised Jehovah, the God of gods, by sending for the sacred vessels of His Temple that the drunken revelers might defile them with their wine, their levity, their profanity and their lewdness. "They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone"; but their impious defiance was shortlived. "*In that same hour* came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." Not an audible word had been spoken, yet at the appearance of that mystic Hand, the night of Belshazzar's pleasure was turned into fear, not only for him, but also for his wives, his concubines, his nobles and all that were feasting with him.

The place where the Hand wrote was "over against the candlestick," so that the lamps on that sacred lampstand might illuminate that which was written. This is a beautiful picture of the way in which God convicts a sinner of his sin. Belshazzar had brought in all the sacred vessels of the temple and was doing

his utmost to profane them all. The wild revelers were drinking wine out of the golden vessels which the priests used in the temple service. But they could not drink out of the golden candlestick; so it stood there in its silent majesty, its seven lamps so quietly burning in their purity, lighting up that scene of debauchery. Does not the Holy Spirit in this way often stand yearning and brooding over the sinner, seeking to turn him from his evil ways? Then *the Hand writes*—the written Word of God is brought to the notice of the sinner, to arrest him in his mad career—and the writing is illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and the sinner is convicted of his sin. God's writing on the wall of a sinner's heart is always *over against the candlestick*: for the Holy Spirit is always there to accompany His Word, to drive it home with pungent conviction, and to show him Jesus, the Light of the world.

The writing was a solemn prediction of doom to the terrified king. "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." Well might Belshazzar have exclaimed, in the words of Isa. 21: 2, "A grievous vision is declared unto me." Even while he was feasting in his drunkenness, the army of Cyrus had deflected the course of the River Euphrates, having dug for it another channel. The river gates were left unlocked that night, forgotten by the drunken sentinel; and the besieging army marched into the city by the dry river bed. "The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously" was fulfilled in the desertion of two great officers of Belshazzar's—Gadatas and Gobry-

as—who went over to the side of the Persians and led them direct to the banquet hall. Thus was fulfilled God's prophecy of doom; and "*in that night*—the night of his pleasure—was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

There are several classes of people mentioned in Isaiah's prophecy: the careless ones who are preparing the tables, eating, drinking and making merry; the princes who anoint each his shield, rubbing off the rust which might have accumulated in days of peace, and preparing themselves for the fight; and apart from them all we see the watchman, standing alert in his tower, straining every nerve, peering into the darkness, hearkening diligently with much heed. He cries as a lion (v. 8, mar.), with a voice of authority which can be heard from afar. First he assures the king that he has been on the watch all day and all night, and has allowed nothing to escape him. Now he announces the first coming of news: a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen; or a chariot of honor in which the commander in chief would ride, attended by outriders. This was probably the triumphant march of the general, Cyrus.

Next came a chariot of asses or mules (which were much used as steeds by the Persians); and a chariot of camels (very much used by the Medes); representing the two nations whose combined power was even then conquering Babylon. The message brought by the Medo-Persian messengers led by their triumphant general, was: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground." Belshazzar and his drunken guests had spent the night in praising those gods of gold

and silver, wood and stone; but what could they do for them? "They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity." Isa. 46:2. Even so will those be disappointed who are trusting in their gold and silver to deliver them in the great day of the Lord's wrath. Nothing of the treasures of this world will be of any avail then.

The prophet then addresses the believing remnant of the Jews, as if to apply to them the hope and comfort of the vision. "O my threshing and the corn of my floor, that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you" (v. 10). Babylon had crushed and oppressed them like the flail of the threshing floor beating out the grain. But God's hand was over them, He had not forsaken them, the suffering and trial were not to last forever. God permits His wheat to be threshed and sifted, the chaff is beaten out and carried away, but He does not allow the least grain to be destroyed. See Amos 9:9. Hypocrites are like the chaff and the straw, which take up a great deal of room, but are of small value. Persecution often results in separating them from God's true wheat, and thus in purging His threshing floor.

"'And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.' Luke 22:31, 32. There are spiritual transactions taking place that we know nothing of. Satan's request and Christ's prayer. We are not told what Christ's answer was to Satan, nor if He answered him at all. But He did pray to His Father for Peter. Christ's prayer was more effectual than Satan's request. But

Satan had the opportunity of handling the sieve. He could not keep the wheat, he got the chaff alone. Do not mind the siftings or the shakings, for you know that prayer is going up beforehand for you that your faith fail not. Satan will only get the chaff, that which is fit for burning. With the tares he gets the grain and the chaff. Wheat is worth sifting. Some wheat is sifted, agitated, more than others because the chaff is harder to get off. Some is so ripened that the chaff separates with little or no sifting.

" 'But after thou art converted (sifted, tested) strengthen thy brethren.' Point out the difficulty you have been through. You need not point out what you have lost. It will be self-evident. You will not have to advertise that you have lost the chaff, and Satan won't advertise that he has got the chaff either.

" 'Satan hath desired to have you. . . . I have prayed for thee. I pray for them, . . . Holy Father, keep through thine own name. . . . I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." John 17: 9, 11, 12. It is a wonderful thing to be on Christ's prayer list. He says to His own, 'I have prayed for thee when temptation was looming up and I ever live to make intercession, so you can come to Me at all times.'

"Praise God for the unknown intercession of Jesus Christ. He knows and sees beforehand Satan's move. Therefore He says, 'Before they call, I will answer.' Christ gets in His request before Satan does his temptation. But we have our part. You can anticipate difficulty, therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, to help in time of need. Lay in a stock in anticipation

to obtain mercy and to find grace to help in time of need. Lay in a stock in anticipation of the time of need. The majority of Christians have little or no credit balance on the prayer side, and then they are weak in grace to help in time of need.

"But God can make Peters out of Simons. Look at Peter before Pentecost and Peter afterwards. Even Paul had to acknowledge that he was a *pillar*. And Peter knew what it was, as he recorded in his epistle, to be kept by the power of God through faith. A three-cornered fight: Christ, Satan and Peter. Christ takes sides with Peter, and it is two to one. And you know the result. The triangle fight is still on. You keep the same relative positions, and you will have the same result. Not only delivered, but able to strengthen your brethren. The one who has been through the conflict is the best one to strengthen the weaker one. Thanks be unto God who causeth us to conquer and giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now let us apply the vision of hope and comfort which Isaiah saw to the "last days" in which we are living. A great crisis is imminent, and the Babylon power is going to fall. The Coming of our Lord will mean not only joy and comfort to His watching ones, but also terror and destruction to those who are not ready to meet Him. For those who, like Belshazzar and his guests, are spending their time in forgetfulness of God, in pleasure and folly, in lust and debauchery, the night of their pleasure will be turned into sudden destruction. How important then, that the Lord's own people, those who sigh and cry over the abominations they see around them, should learn from

this vision what their attitude and their ministry should be, not only Godward, but manward. They will find that the Lord is calling them to awaken others, and snatch them as brands from the burning, and to deliver them from the tyranny of Satan into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The watchman is a type of the ministers and workers whom the Lord has called to watch for souls. This must be a life of entire consecration to the service of God. "My Lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights." The Christian watchman is never off duty. The conflict is thickening as the end draws near; this care of souls does not end with the proclamation of the message in sermon or testimony. There will often be the personal work needed in addition, and the travail in intercessory prayer, perhaps all through the night. But it is *with Jesus.* He does not send us into the conflict alone. He is the great Watchman, and into His fellowship He calls us all. What shall be our response as we hear Him cry: "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

The eyes, ears and lips of the watchman are specially referred to. The very title—watchman—implies the use of his eyes, to be constantly on the alert to see what is transpiring, what foes are advancing or what dangers threaten. The Lord says here that He is *to declare what he seeth.* Even so the Christian watchman in these last days should be ever looking out for the advance of spiritual enemies, as well as for signs of the Lord's return; and should proclaim faithfully to his people all that he sees. His ears must also be anointed and consecrated to the Lord's service—

"He hearkened diligently with much heed." How we need specially anointed ears in these days when there are so many kinds of voices in the world (1 Cor. 14: 10); that we may be able to distinguish the voice of God among them all. We need also cleansed and anointed lips, touched with the live coal of Pentecostal fire, to declare to the people what we have seen and heard. "That which I have heard of the Lord of hosts have I declared unto you."

The watchman's work is twofold: to encourage and cheer the faithful, waiting ones, and to warn the careless ones of impending judgment. "Watchman, what of the night? The watchman saith, The morning cometh *and also the night.*" This is what Christ's watchmen have to proclaim in regard to His Second Coming. It will be a morning of joy to those who are ready, but to the careless and unbelieving it will mean terrible night—the blackness of darkness forever and ever. May God help us to be faithful to our charge, and not to shun to declare the whole counsel of God. The Second Coming of Jesus will have a double result, like the pillar of God's presence when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. "It came and stood between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel: and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these." Ex. 14:20. "To the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life." 2 Cor. 2:16.

The watchman cried *as a lion* (v. 8, mar.): a bold, loud, prevailing cry. Even so the Lord's message in these last days must go forth with no uncertain sound, but with the boldness, clearness and prevailing force of the Overcomer—the Lion of Judah—behind it.

The *princes* addressed in the vision may be taken as typical of the overcomers, those who are living the reigning life, a life of victory over sin by the power of the indwelling Spirit. They are not to be among those who sit down for idle waiting or for feasting and reveling; but the cry goes forth: "Arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield." What is the spiritual significance of this exhortation in these last days of conflict, when the great crisis draws so near? In Eph. 6:16 we read: "Above all taking the *shield of faith,* wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one." In Psalm 3:3 we read: "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me," and God said to Abram: "Fear not, Abram, *I am thy shield,* and thy exceeding great reward." Gen. 15:1. Faith is the hand by which we grasp the Lord Himself, and put Him between us and the enemy. Thus it is *the shield of faith,* and its use and efficacy depend upon our faith.

During days of peace when a shield is not used, it is liable to get rusty; hence when the time of battle comes the princes arise and anoint the shield, rubbing off all the rust and preparing it for use in warfare. Has our shield of faith become rusty for lack of use? Has the enemy succeeded in lulling us into the sleep of selfish ease and enjoyment, perhaps rejoicing in the spiritual blessings which the Lord has bestowed upon us, but forgetting that "the Son of God goes forth *to war,*" and that He calls us to follow Him in the conflict? If so, let us seek a fresh anointing with the oil of the Holy Spirit, that our shield of faith may be polished until all the rust disappears and it shines once more. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find *faith* on the earth?" Luke 18:8. This shows us

that there will be many rusty shields in the days preceeding His Coming, and it behooves us to arise and shake off all slothfulness, and seek this fresh anointing of faith both for ourselves and for others.

We need not only the faith that lays hold of Jesus for salvation, but also the faith that is the fruit of the Spirit, the faith that is one of the gifts of the Spirit, the faith that can remove mountains, the faith of the poor widow that will not be denied. Let us test our lives and ministry by the signs which must follow those who *really believe*. "These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark 16:17, 18. If these signs are present as a confirmation of the Word when we proclaim it, the hearers will be encouraged to arise and anoint their own shields, their faith will grow exceedingly, and an army of overcoming princes will be raised up to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

CHAPTER IX

The Days of Noah and Lot

"As it was in the time of Noah, so will it also be in the time of the Son of man. Men were eating and drinking, taking wives and giving wives, up to the very day on which Noah entered the ark, and the deluge came and destroyed them all. The same was true in the time of Lot: they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building: but on the day that Lot left Sodom, God rained fire and brimstone from the sky and destroyed them all. Exactly so will it be on the day that the veil is lifted from the Son of man." Luke 17:26-30, Weymouth.

The Deluge and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are used in God's Word as outstanding examples of His judgment on sinners. In the same way the preservation of Noah and Lot in the midst of the judgment which fell on those around them is used as an illustration of the way in which the Lord will keep His own people safe, and either take them out or carry them through the judgments which are yet future. "Through faith Noah, being divinely taught about things as yet unseen, reverently gave heed and built an ark for the sake of his family; and by this act he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which depends on faith. God did not spare the ancient world, although He preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a deluge on the world of the ungodly.

He reduced to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and condemned them to overthrow, *making them an example to people who might in future be living godless lives.* But when righteous Lot was so distressed by the gross misconduct of immoral men, he rescued him. (For their lawless deeds were torture, day after day, to the pure soul of that righteous man—all that he saw and heard whilst living in their midst.) Since all this is so, the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from temptations, and on the other hand how to keep the unrighteous under punishment in readiness for the day of judgment, and especially those who are abandoned to sensuality—craving as they do, for polluted things, and scorning control." Heb. 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5-10, Weymouth.

These passages prove without a doubt that we are to see in Noah and Lot striking types of God's people in the days immediately preceding the day of judgment. So if when studying the characteristics of those days and comparing them with our own, we find that they are similar, we have additional proof that we are indeed in the "last days" of this dispensation, and that the final day of judgment on the godless draweth near. What then were the special marks of the days in which Noah and Lot lived? Our Lord tells us that during the one hundred and twenty years when Noah was builidng the ark and preaching of coming judgment, the world around him was going on with its ordinary occupations, unmoved by his exhortations to repentance. The special things mentioned about those careless sinners are that they were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage." This doubtless refers not to the ordinary eating and marrying which were God's

ordinances for the sustenance and propagation of the race, but to *irregularities* in food and in the marriage relationship.

We see in 1 Tim. 4:1-4 that the Spirit has given an express declaration of the characteristics of the last days, one of which will be the prevalence of doctrines of demons. These false teachings emanate from the devil himself, and are intended to further his cause upon earth. He spreads them among men not merely by suggesting them in his temptations to individuals, but by sending out a host of *demon possessed teachers.* These emissaries of the evil one must have a certain amount of influence and prestige, and it is evident that they will be very plausible and seductive, because we are told that through their persuasions "some shall depart from the faith." The main points of the teaching of these deceiving spirits are exactly the same as those characteristic of the days of Noah we have already noted, viz., irregularities in food and in marriage. They "teach falsely and have their own consciences seared as with a hot iron; forbidding people to marry, and insisting on abstinence from foods which God has created to be partaken of, with thankfulness, by those who believe and have a clear knowledge of the truth."

These two signs are most clearly manifested on every side in these days. Drunkenness and gluttony on the one hand appear in every land where the people have wealth; and on the other hand we find restrictions on food, the forbidding of certain articles of diet such as meat and alcoholic liquor, not from hygienic reasons but with *some religious significance.* It is a well-known fact that spiritualistic mediums are told to abstain from meat and liquor, because these articles of

food render them less susceptible to spirit influences. There are many religious cults also which make restrictions on the diet of their adherents, such as abstinence from breakfast, from the use of salt, from cooked foods, from underground vegetables and other things equally foolish.

There may be a possible explanation here of the fact, otherwise so astounding, that so good a move as prohibition has been permitted by the devil to become an actual fact in these last days in the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the U. S. A. Satan's great aim and object is to get men to worship him: see the impious effrontery with which he even suggested it to the Son of God Himself when tempting Him in the wilderness. "If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine." Therefore since abstinence from strong drink makes men more susceptible to spirit influences, it is not surprising that the devil should permit and even favor prohibition. He doubtless thinks that he can counteract its benefits by leading men to plunge more deeply into vices even worse than intemperance. His main object all through is to get men to worship him; and this will be attained when the personal Antichrist (the incarnation of Satan) will be supreme upon the earth. "And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. 13:4-8. See also 2 Thess. 2:4-9.

Not only in relation to food, but also in the realm

of the marriage relationship, never were there such abuses and irregularities as there are to-day. Among the subjects discussed in the address of the Board of Bishops at the recent General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Springfield, Mass., were Prohibition, Secret Orders, Worldliness, Divorce. We quote from this address: "These recent years have brought us a depression of deep, moral standards which must be the concern of every lover of mankind. Every phase of individual and corporate life seems to have been included in this downward tendency. The integrity of manhood, the virtue of womanhood, the sanctity of the marriage relations, well-approved habits of clean living, of pure thinking, of high moral conduct in both sexes, have felt the withering touch of a widespread degeneracy."

Designating divorce as "the chief scandal" the address continues: "Is there any one situation which should so shock and shame the American people as the steady growth of the divorce evil? Has it not already become the chief scandal in our modern life? A reliable authority affirms that in every eleven days we have as many divorces as England has in a year. It is computed that in every four minutes of every day and night some American couple determines upon a separation. The record is that one hundred and thirty-three thousand American families were wrecked by divorce in one recent year. In the last twenty years three million, seven hundred and sixty-seven men and women secured divorce papers. This involved five million six hundred thousand minor children whose homes were destroyed by the divorce mills. Can a more frightful condition be imagined? What are the

causes? The frivolous temper of our times, the dissemination of loose views upon almost every subject, the impatience of restraint, ridicule of the old-fashioned virtues, the quickened pace which keeps the nerves forever on edge, the passion for luxury, the immodesty in dress, pernicious incitements of modern fiction, the passing of much of the sacred home life of yesterday, and, above all, the loss of the sense of God and of moral conditions."

If we turn to the Book of Genesis and study what is told us of the days when Noah lived, we shall find other most interesting characteristics which correspond in a marked way with those of the days in which we are living. One of these is a vast increase of population: "men began to multiply on the face of the earth." Gen. 6:1. This is certainly true of these days, esp-cially in heathen lands like India, China and Africa. In spite of the frequent famines and pestilences which carry off thousands, the population is increasing at a rate which makes thoughtful men wonder how long the world will be capable of maintaining its inhabitants. We find also in those days before the Flood a rapid progress in all the mechanical arts, many inventions, labor-saving devices, development of music and the fine arts, not in their true sphere, to aid in the worship of God, but in defiance of Him. It is remarkable to notice that that high development of civilization (probably in some ways superior to that of the present day, and certainly possessing more knowledge along certain lines) was in the line of Cain, among the defiant and God-rejecting sinners.

Another of the characteristics of those days of Noah

was the traffic with evil spirits from the pit of hell. Gen. 6:1-4 tells us the sad story of this illicit communication with evil spirits which producced the Nephilim or "fallen ones." This was their name from God's point of view; while by men they were called "Rephaim" or *giants,* men greater than their fellows, of colossal size and superhuman strength. Their descendants are mentioned as late as the time of David; and his conflict with one of them—Goliath of Gath—is an illustration given us for all time to show God's way of overcoming the devil and all his hosts. "The Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's." 1 Sam. 17:47. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zech. 4:6.

The great increase of spiritism and many other demon-inspired cults in these days shows us the same characteristic; and we may expect it to be more marked as the Lord's Coming draws nigh. In Rev. 16:13, 14 John saw under the pouring out of the sixth vial, "Three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Thus we see all the powers of darkness united in one great, supreme effort to wrest the kingship of this earth from Him whose right it is to reign, and to prevent the setting up of God's King upon His holy hill of Zion.

All this forms a challenge to the church in these "last days." The Lord is pouring out His Spirit in Pentecostal fullness in order to enable His people to

meet the furious onslaughts of the enemy. It is vain to think that we know how to meet and to conquer him in our own strength, or because of past experience. He will continually be attacking us in new ways, with more subtle devices than ever, and we may expect more and more "lying wonders," miracles, and manifestations of Satanic power as the end draws near. In order to meet and overcome these we need new manifestations of the power of the Spirit of God. We are not to be afraid of the enemy, though he is far stronger than we are: but every fresh revelation of his power should drive us to hide away deeper than ever in God and to expect an ever more and more mighty manifestation of His Spirit to meet and overcome all the fiery darts of the enemy.

In the days before the Flood we notice that at first the holy seed, or the true worshipers of Jehovah (the line of Seth), kept themselves unspotted from the world, and had no fellowship with the ungodly line of Cain. But little by little the holy seed joined hands with the world, men lost the pilgrim spirit, dwelt no more in tents but gathered together in cities and settled down in this world in reckless and open defiance of God; until by the time of Noah there was no distinction between the holy seed and the world. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Gen. 6:5, 6.

After the preaching of the word of God for one hundred and twenty years, Noah had only his own family who were willing to come with him into the

ark. This shows us how absolutely the holy seed had mingled with the world and learned their ways, until no difference could be distinguished between them. In these last days too we notice a sad alliance between the church and the world. The wide spread of modernism has done its utmost to strip the church of all her power, to destroy her faith in the supernatural, and to entirely break down the wall of separation between her and the world.

"There was recently unveiled in the West Side Unitarian Church, Charles Francis Potter, rector, New York City, a statue by Mr. Carl Akeley, called 'The Chrysalis.' This statue depicts a young man emerging from the form of a gorilla. The rector said on this occasion, 'Exhibition of this statue will be the first step in an anti-fundamentalist campaign. The unveiling takes place as a part of the celebration of 'Evolution Day.' This drift of modern religionists from the 'faith once for all delivered to the saints' can be characterized in the words of 2 Thess. 2:10-12. 'With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.'

"Some modern so-called Christians have said that belief in evolution is not inconsistent with Christianity; but there is not the slightest relationship between a theory of man's origin from the lower animals and the Bible's clear statement that man is the direct result of the creative act of a personal God. Such people cannot call themselves Christians and Mr. Anton

Quello suggests that they be rightfully given a new name, 'a name that describes them and distinguishes them from Christianity and any other religions. If the unveiling of this man-gor statue is the first step in an anti-fundamentalist campaign, it will be appropriate to also christen the followers of the man-gor religion, *Mangorites.*'

"It takes more blind credulity to believe such nonsense than it does to believe the simple statement, 'God created man in his own image.' Modernism feeds upon a false optimism and is like the ostrich that thinks himself safe from harm if only his head is stuck in the sand. The Word of God flashes out its danger signal, calls things by their right name and strips away all camouflage. The following extract from our contemporary, *The Presbyterian,* sounds a clear note concerning the trend of the day: 'No man of sobriety and moral sensitiveness can fail to be greatly moved by the terrific crimes so frequently chronicled in these days. The unprovoked murder, the bloodthirst for money, the low estimate of life, and the disregard for rights of property, declare in no uncertain sound that a strong tide of sin and death is sweeping modern civilization. What deepens the darkness is the amount of this which is associated with our institutions of learning. The recent dastardly murder of a boy friend by two of the advanced men in Chicago University, the wave of sexual crime in connection with our middlegrade schools and other like reports, cause the inquiry, What is our modern education doing for us? Is it proving a baneful influence in those young lives? What about the doctrine of evolution? If it be true that man is but a development of the brute, then why be surprised at

the low brute instincts and manifestations? If the young Chicago students were returning to the tiger type, or developing to a new one, why should they be punished? If sin is only the remnants of the old brute instincts, then why resist it until man develops out of it? If the doctrine so widely advocated to bring a child up in the way he *would* go is sound, then why punish him or even resist him in following his own way?

"But some will say, 'Let us be optimistic. These conditions have existed before and have passed away in the course of progress.' Is anything more terrible than false optimism, which will not see sin and evil and will not make any resistance or seek a way of relief? There have been waves of sin before, but the end of the antediluvian world, the burning of Sodom, the fall of Jerusalem and Rome, the collapse of Germany, and many other like examples, declare God's revealed truth: 'the way of transgressors is hard.' and 'the wages of sin is death.' It is high time that this age was waking out of its sleep of indulgence and bringing forth fruits of repentance in its effort to flee from the wrath to come.

"Speaking about the prevailing crime in connection with young Loeb, the nineteen-year-old graduate of Chicago University, one of the Philadelphia dailies said: 'He had probably been reading modernistic literature, and had obtained this idea of experience from that.' We, of course, see in this condition of world affairs one of the evident signs of the Lord's imminent return, and take it, not as a signal to fold our hands and wait idly for the trumpet blast, but to be up and doing, warning every man everywhere to repent, and praying for *world-wide revival.*" (Pentecostal Evangel.)

There is one more remarkable characteristic which we may note of the days before the Flood, viz., the rejection of the preaching of Enoch. In Jude 14 he is quoted as a type of the preachers of the last days, speaking under the anointing of the Spirit and opposing the teachings of error. "Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints; to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." It was probably the judgment of the Deluge to which Enoch's prophecy primarily referred; and it is interesting to note how his faith was manifested in his naming of his son. Methuselah means: "When he is dead, it shall be sent," referring to the Deluge, the judgment of which Enoch had been prophesying and warning the ungodly sinners.

The death of Methuselah occurred (Bible Dictionary) in 2848 B. C., and the Deluge followed in the same year. Methuselah was alive all those 120 years that Noah was preaching, doubtless encouraging the younger man by his wise counsel, and urging the sinners to take heed to the warnings. But it was all in vain. They went on with their eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, probably voting Methuselah an old fool and Noah a young fanatic. Methuselah was gathered to his fathers in peace, Noah went on building and preaching, and the scoffers cried: "All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But God's eye was upon those godless sinners, and when the time of His long-suffering

delay—the hundred and twenty years promised to men for repentance—had expired, the judgment fell. "Nor did they realize any danger till the Deluge came and swept them all away: so will it be at the Coming of the Son of man." Matt. 24:39, Weymouth.

In these days also God has been sending through the Latter-rain outpouring a last call to the godless world to repent. The preaching of full salvation which has girdled the globe during the past twenty odd years has been like a clarion call to awaken the sleeping ones, to warn them of impending judgment. But by the world at large this has been rejected, as was the preaching of Enoch and Noah. It is remarkable to note that these two men are types of two classes of believers in what happened to them: Enoch of the watching ones who will be translated *before* the great judgment falls; and Noah of those who will be carried in safety *through* the terrible tribulation and God's judgments on the earth.

The characteristics of the days of Lot which our Lord specially mentions add two more, which we see on every hand in the days in which we live, viz., "buying and selling" and "planting and building." The buying and selling refers to *dishonesty* in both these transactions: the buyer trying to overreach the seller, and the seller doing his best to cheat the buyer. It covers all kinds of trickery and dishonesty in commercial life. If these were prevalent in the days of Lot, how much more in these days. The following quotation from the *Free Methodist* will illustrate this:

"Never since the days of Noah's flood has the earth been so filled with crime and violence as to-day. Murder, robbery, forgery and crimes of every conceivable

nature are rampant throughout the whole earth. In England the police declare that the number of weapons carried by people to-day is 'a matter of consternation.' Before the War, Berlin was considered one of the safest cities in the world, but recently there were 33,-633 crimes committed in that city in one single month, or an average of eleven hundred crimes a day. In the United States in the last ten years there were 86,-934 murders committed, and last year there were 9,500. Think of it! During the month of June, in the city of Chicago, there was an average of one murder a day, and during the first six months of the present year (1923) there was the horrible number of 177 murders in that one city. In San Quentin penitentiary in California the prison is so crowded with criminals that beds have to be placed in the halls to accommodate the newcomers. Over three thousand criminals are in that one institution, the greatest number ever known to be there.

"A prominent captain of detectives recently said: 'Our criminal situation is literally unheard of in the civilized world. Life and property have never been so insecure as they are in the United States at the present time. Our jails are overflowing and so are our penitentiaries, our reform schools and our other institutions.' The superintendent of the California State Identification Bureau is reported to have said that last year's crime cost the State of California fifty million dollars, and at the rate it is going, it will cost eighty million dollars in 1924, which is an increase in the cost of crime of more than fifty per cent in a single year. Think of such an astonishing sum spent for crime in one year in just one State!

"It is said that crimes of violence have increased twelve hundred per cent in ten years, and it costs more to-day to handle the criminals of our country than it costs to maintain all our schools and educational institutions. All preachers of the Gospel ought to warn men against these horrible things, yet many are complacently saying that the world is getting better. All these things agree exactly with what divine revelation in the Word of God foretold. The Lord Jesus Christ said that in the latter days 'lawlessness should abound.' He said it would be again as it was in the days of Noah, when the earth was corrupt before God and filled with violence. The prophet Hosea points to the last days and reveals a whole 'troop of robbers' in the earth. Paul declares that the days of the end will be 'perilous times' and evil men will 'wax worse and worse.' Peter points to the last days and reveals men reveling in lust and 'despising government.' Jude also speaks of the end when he says that men shall be 'filthy' and 'defiled' and 'despise dominion.' This appalling condition of crime and lawlessness which is abounding in the whole earth is an unmistakable sign that the end of the age is drawing near. The way is being prepared for the Antichrist—that terror whom the Word of God reveals as the 'lawless one,' and who will violate every just law, and do 'according to his own will.'

"How many people realize that within the last ten years have occurred the most destructive earthquakes in the history of the world, the greatest famine in the history of the world, and the greatest pestilence in the history of the world? Is it not apparent that the judgments of Almighty God are increasing? Is it not a mystery that the church is not prostrate on its face

before God, so acute is the crisis and so imminent the danger? If all these judgments are but preliminary (and they can be no more), what shall it be when that great and dreadful day breaks forth? The gatherer of these fragments is not a pessimist, but we must face facts. All of what the world calls optimism cannot change them. They are the true optimists who have made their peace with God through Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son. They have nothing to fear, and they only are safe in this critical time of the world's history."—John McKnight.

Not only is all this dishonesty and crime a characteristic of these days, but the "planting and building" recorded of the days of Lot are also very marked. The *planting* applies to the dwellers in country places, and the *building* to those who live in the cities. When a man plants a few hundred acres with fruit trees or cotton it is a sign that he intends to settle down in that place; for men do not plant without the intention of staying there to enjoy their crops and reap the profit. In the same way the dwellers in cities occupy themselves in building. They have not space to do much planting, so they build and build and build until the great cities come into existence. Then they add one story to another until they have skyscrapers. In both illustrations there is the thought of settling down and making their home in this world.

Dear reader, where is your home? Are you among those who *dwell on the earth,* referred to repeatedly in Revelation 13? That does not mean merely that they live and work in the world, for those described as *dwelling in heaven* (v. 6) are also inhabitants of this world. It refers to their real citizenship, their

real home. In these last days the great majority of men are settling down in this world,—buying, selling, planting and building,—as if all this were the sole aim and object of their existence. They are setting their hearts on things of this world, and neglecting God and eternal verities.

We have a striking instance of *building* in the Tower of Babel, between the days of Noah and those of Lot. Those people had heard of the judgment of the Flood, and being unbelievers they did not trust God's promise given to Noah and his sons in Gen. 9:15, "The waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." Therefore they decided to build a tower which should reach to heaven, so that in case of another flood they could save themselves without needing to turn to God. This is the old plan which we have seen since the time of Cain: man trying to save himself and to get to God by his own efforts, despising and rejecting God's plan of salvation through a blood atonement. It is one of the marked characteristics of these days also, and lies at the root of all the modern cults. It is too humbling to man's pride to acknowledge himself a helpless sinner and ask God to save him. The modern man, like the ancient one, tries to reach heaven by his own building, but he falls short every time; and his tower ends in failure and confusion.

There is a solemn little verse of three words which forms an additional commentary of Jesus Himself upon the history of the days of Lot: *"Remember Lot's Wife."* This is one of the most solemn warnings given to Christians in this age, and it is given by the lips of our beloved Lord Himself. If the destruction of Sodom is typical of the judgment that will fall on the world

during and after the Great Tribulation, the rescue of Lot and his escape to the mountain must typify the Rapture of the saints when our Lord comes to the air to catch away His bride. Lot and his two daughters were taken right away without passing through the catastrophe; but his wife disobeyed the command, "Look not behind thee," and was overtaken by the judgment of God. She is a solemn object-lesson to all Christians, warning us that not *all* will be found watching at the time of the Rapture, and hence not all will be caught away at that time.

We may notice three special things about Lot's wife. First that she had every opportunity to be saved, so it was not God's fault that she did not escape. The two angels had spent the night in her home, warning her of the coming judgment; and well she knew that God's Word would be fulfilled to the letter and that the catastrophe was imminent. How many are like her to-day: brought up in a Christian home, taught in an evangelical Sunday school, members of an assembly where the Full Gospel is preached and the soon Coming of Jesus proclaimed with no uncertain sound. And yet they do not escape, they do not heed the warning.

Secondly, we may note that though her body was brought out of Sodom, her heart remained there. The Lord's loving-kindness was so great that He told the angels to lay hold of her hand as well as that of her husband, and lead her out of the wicked city. He did all He possibly could to save her, short of forcing her free will. But she had a home and possessions in Sodom, and her heart's affections were centered on her treasures there. She looked toward the bleak, barren mountain, and thought of the hard time they

would have living in a cave up there, and in her heart she hankered after the comfortable home in Sodom. Perhaps she thought the judgment might be delayed long enough for her to go back and bring some of her belongings with her—some comfortable armchair, something to mitigate the discomforts which she felt would await her on the mountain. So she turned back to look—perhaps to see whether the fire and brimstone had begun yet to fall—and the judgment overtook her. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and *looking back* is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:62. It will not avail you to have your body in a church service or in a prayer meeting when Jesus comes, if your *heart* is not right with Him. *You will remain where your heart is.* "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matt. 6:21. So if your treasure is all laid up in heaven, your heart will be there too, and you will be ready to go up the moment the call comes.

Thirdly, we note that Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of *salt*. It does not say that she was destroyed with the godless of the city: on the contrary it seems that the very material into which her body was changed gives us a hope of her ultimate salvation. Salt is a type of preservation. God destroyed her body, but He preserved her soul as if by salt. Lot is a type of those who will be caught away before the coming judgment, and his wife of those who will be *preserved through it*. But oh, how much better for us to be ready when the Bridegroom comes, and to be members of that glorious company which shall form the bride of the Lamb!

"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be

taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill: the one shall be taken and the other left." There is a distinct separation between the two nameless ones in the field, and between the two nameless ones at the mill. United in the field, united over the mill, but separated as far as heaven is from earth. The feet of both are planted in the field, but one was seated in heavenly places. The field is the world. Two men can be in an office, in a locomotive, in any part of the world, joined together in one occupation. One is linked to the occupation, the other is linked to his Lord. Then when the heavenly pull comes, the natural sequence takes place. The one chained to his occupation is chained, the other one, linked to his Lord, responds to the upward pull. One taken, the other left.

"You say, 'It is arbitrary, it is unfair for the one left.' All right, reverse the order, and the one who was to be taken is allowed to remain. What takes place? There has been a forcible transplanting, and neither would be satisfied. The one not ready who is taken will be in terror, in misery, for he has no wedding garment on, and the shame of his nakedness will appear. He would beg and intreat to be allowed to come back to his field. The other one would be worse off, for he has missed his Lord, and the field never looked so earthy, so uninviting, and never appeared so much like a wilderness.

"Christ says, 'Be ye also ready.' The ready man, the ready woman was taken and the unready ones were left behind. Who is to blame? A train is advertized to start on a transcontinental trip. The man delays or is delayed by *most pressing business*. The train is ready, the man is

not. He sees the train pull out of the depot, and his friend who caught the train waving to him. Does he blame the conductor, does he blame the engineer? Does he blame his watch or the clock at the depot? He may. It makes no difference. They that were ready went into the train that was ready. His business was to catch the train that he had made reservations for. The pressing business was not the pressing business as far as catching the train and getting across the continent was concerned.

"The door of the ark was shut on time. The rain descended on time, and the ark floated on the timely waters, untimely for those who were behind time. And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. God is not arbitrary, but man is dilatory. How can we be ready? Looking for that blessed Hope, watching for the Master's return. Detachment from the things below, and attachment to the things above. Set your affection on things above by detaching them from things below. It lies within the province of each to be either a left one or a taken one."

CHAPTER X

Samson the Nazarite

There is something peculiarly interesting and instructive about the regulations as to the vow of a Nazarite under the law of Moses. Other laws and ceremonies were compulsory: this was an entirely voluntary matter. No grown man or woman was ever compelled to take the vow of a Nazarite: it proceeded from the spontaneous overflow of a loving heart, grateful for some special mercy, such as deliverance from sickness, sorrow or danger. Some were Nazarites for life, such as Samson (Judges 13:5), Samuel (1 Sam. 1:20-28); and probably Elijah and John the Baptist: in these cases the vow was voluntarily made by the parents before their birth. Many, on the other hand, must have taken the vow for a longer or shorter period during their lifetime, as we see Paul did in Acts 18:18.

There were three main points in the Nazarite vow, the fundamental idea being that of *separation,* which is the meaning of the Hebrew word *Nazir* (See Num. 6). The first promise was *to refrain from drinking wine.* Here we have typified the consecration of God's separated ones as regards all the social functions of life. "Wine that maketh glad the heart of man" (Psalm 104:15), is often used in Scripture as a type of *joy,* and so the Nazarite vow teaches us that God would

have us turn away from the world to HIM for the satisfaction of every longing of the heart.

An old writer has said: "The aim of the Nazarite vow was a dominion over the lower, animal side of our nature, that meant vigor both of mind and body. 'Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire.' Lam. 4:7. While tacitly condemning self-indulgence (See Amos 2:11, 12), it taught that special blessing and influence follow upon a wise and voluntary abstinence from that which, if not actually unlawful, is certainly superfluous, possibly injurious for us, and a bad example for others." "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended, or is made weak." Rom. 14:21.

For the Pentecostal Christian in this dispensation of the Holy Ghost there lies an even deeper lesson in the abstinence from every product of the vine. The Lord would draw us into such a life of close communion with Himself that *all* the fresh springs of our joy, vigor and activity are in HIM and not in this present world. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Eph. 5:18. The wine of earth represents the best that this world can produce to give happiness; and the Holy Spirit is *God's best,* providing the believer with a refreshing not found elsewhere, a joy unspeakable and full of glory. How important it is for the prospective missionary to learn this lesson before going forth into the dry and barren deserts of heathenism. He must learn not to depend on meetings, on Christian fellowship or on "earthly props" for his spiritual life; for these will all be ab-

sent in the Mission Field, and the only life that will avail him there is that whose springs are in God Himself, feeding on the hidden manna, drinking at the upper springs.

The second promise of the Nazarite was *to refrain from cutting his hair*. Here we have typified the consecration of all the mental powers, the reason and the intellect of God's separated ones. Long hair is also a type of *strength,* and our true secret of power, whether physical, mental or spiritual, lies in a life of separation unto Him. This was the only *visible* sign of the Nazarite. The world could not see whether he really abstained from wine or from contact with death, —that was between him and his God, witnessed only by his immediate family,—but the long, flowing locks were an external sign, visible to all the world, marking him out as a separated one. Thus the *power* in a Christian life is what the world can see. They know nothing of the believer's inner life of communion with his God, but they can all recognize the "signs following" when the power of God is manifested in his ministry. Our speech and our preaching should go forth not in word only but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. 1 Thess. 1:5.

Long hair is also a symbol of *submission,* of being under authority. "For this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority upon her head." 1 Cor. 11:10, R. V. If the long hair of a woman was a sign of her submission to her husband (see margin of King James Version), surely the long hair of the Nazarite was a type of his absolute surrender to the will of God, to be guided and controlled in everything by Him alone. Note how the long tresses of the bride in the

Song of Songs are repeatedly referred to, and how beautifully they portray the church's submission and absolute obedience to her Lord.

The third promise of the Nazarite vow was *to refrain from contact with death.* In all the Scriptures death is a type of *sin,* and one metaphor is piled on another to teach us how hateful, how abominable is sin in the sight of a holy God, and how no one defiled by sin can ever enter His sacred presence. There is first the cleansing from past sins when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and are saved. Then the Spirit leads us on into a life of holiness, applying continually the "washing of water by the Word," and keeping us ever walking in the light, under the cleansing power of the Blood of Jesus. But as we press on in the Christian life to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and to live an overcoming life, we are increasingly conscious of the awful defilement of the world that "lieth in the wicked one." We realize as never before how our spirits are defiled by contact with the evil around us, even through seeing the licentious pictures on the advertizing boards, and by hearing the profane conversation of those who know not God. More and more do we need to creep away into the secret place with our Master, for Him to apply the Precious Blood to cleanse away all defilement and to make us blind and deaf to all that is not of Him. See Isa. 42:19, 20.

Now these three promises of a life separated unto God for joy, strength and purity, had all been made for Samson by his parents before his birth. Read Judges 13. His name means "Sunny" or "like the sun," and it was God's purpose that he should so live

as to bring rays of heavenly sunshine into all parts of the land of Israel during the dark days of anarchy and confusion in which he lived. But alas! he did not live in the sunshine, but chose rather the deeds of darkness, living for the pleasures and lusts of the world. Yet in spite of the unworthiness of his personal character, God continued to use him as a deliverer of his people from the Philistines as long as he retained his long hair, the visible sign of separation unto God. We have other instances of God's putting His Spirit's power even upon bad men, in Balaam's blessing of Israel and in Saul's prophesying.

But there came a time when Delilah, the subtle temptress of Samson, persuaded him to confess the secret of his great strength, and when she caused his head to be shaved during a sleep of voluptuous ease, the Spirit of the Lord departed and his strength went from him. He awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he knew not that the Lord was departed from him." But his shaking was all in vain: no human efforts nor endeavors can restore the lost power or compensate for the absence of the Spirit of the Lord. Samson's *separation* was a thing of the past, and so was his strength. While he retained the long hair of the Nazarite the strongest cables were like wisps of tow in his grasp, and the ponderous gates of a city an easy load for him to carry to the top of a hill. But after his head was shaved he was as weak as other men, the Philistines captured him, put out his eyes and reduced him to cruel bondage in the prison house. What a picture of the backslider! His separation from the world forgotten, he becomes an easy

prey to his spiritual foes, and lives in darkness and captivity.

Is not the warning of Samson's life a message needed by us in the Pentecostal Movement? The great enemy of our souls is more subtle in his devices than ever, and on every hand he has his Delilahs to seduce and enfeeble God's Spirit-filled people. Spiritual adultery all through the Bible means *conformity with the world.* See James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17. "Don't be too narrow-minded," says one. "You will never win the young people of these days if you do not make the services attractive. And what are we going to do about money? We can never pay off the mortgage on our building if we offend that rich man. You must not preach against divorce and remarriage, or he will not subscribe, because that kind of preaching condemns him. And don't be too emphatic in speaking of the evidence of the Baptism of the Spirit, or in saying that we Pentecostal people have a distinctive testimony, or in stating that all who receive the Latter-rain Baptism of the Spirit will speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance. You know there are differences of opinion among us on these points *nowadays,* and it is very important to keep peace and unity among us at all costs. It is all right for you to have your own opinions, but do not preach them too emphatically and leave other people the right to hold theirs also."

Beloved, *are these statements the voice of the Spirit of God or the voice of Delilah?* I beseech you to wait on God about it until you can answer that question as HE sees right. Can we be free to hold our own opinions with regard to clear and unequivocal statements of the WORD OF GOD? Will God's blessing continue to

rest on a church or an assembly that is not *clean* before Him, even if they gain great riches by their compromise? Is there any kind of attraction so great to the young people as the full and unhindered manifestation of God's power in the meetings, saving, healing and baptizing in the Spirit? Has not our experience of the past twenty years shown us that the largest crowds of young people have always been found where there was most *power of the Spirit* manifested in the signs following? And does not the outcry for more worldly attractions in our meetings proceed from *the loss of the Spirit's power* and an attempt to find a substitute?

The enemy's tactics are going to be more subtle than ever in future. He will not have so much, if any, open fighting as in the past. He sees that many of the open fights he has made have resulted in making us as a Movement take a more definite stand than ever on the Word of God. So he will try more subtle devices. He is going to bring in his Delilahs stealthily, one here and another there, whether in human form or in specious errors or teachings of compromise, so as little by little to shear us of the locks of our Nazarite consecration and cause us as a Movement to lose our spiritual power.

"But there arose false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; *by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of.*" 2 Pet. 2:1, 2. I doubt not there were plenty of people who called Peter an old pessimist when he wrote that. Probably they said

the same of Jude when he told the brethren to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Master Jesus Christ."

We are not ignorant of the devices of Satan, and we know that he has profited to the utmost by his thousands of years' experience in deceiving men; but what can we do against him? What is the remedy for the wave of slothful ease and the beguiling Delilahs which are attacking our Pentecostal Movement on every hand? Is it inevitable that we should fall from our early purity, fail in our world-wide task, and that the Lord should have to remove our candlestick and pick up some other humble, despised group of people who will really remain *separated* as Nazarites unto Himself? Thank God, it is not so! Every one of those who "sigh and cry" over the signs of declension in our midst may become like salt, a potent agent of preservation and cleansing. Let us see to it that we let no bitter feeling and no contentious spirit arise in our hearts, and that we keep low down at the feet of Jesus. And then let *each one* resolve: "As for me and my house we will keep separated unto the Lord. Whatever it may cost us of reproach and misunderstanding, even from our brethren, *our* assembly shall be kept clean, and we will not be beguiled by any of the subtle Delilahs into shearing the locks of our Nazarite separation." The whole Movement is made up of individuals. If each one of us, in the little corner where the Lord has placed us, stands

without flinching for the early purity of faith and a separated life, the enemy's plans will be frustrated, the Delilahs will be unmasked and constrained to leave us, our Movement will be saved from declension and we shall see such a fresh outpouring of the Spirit as will eclipse all manifestations hitherto seen. May God grant it! Amen.

CHAPTER XI

The Great High Priest's Last Letter

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The last recorded appearance of the Lord Jesus after His resurrection was to John, the aged apostle, in his exile on the lonely island of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea. He revealed himself as the *Son of man,* still clothed in His glorified human body, though exalted to the right hand of God. He was wearing a long garment, which may represent both the *high priest's* dress, and also the robe of *royal* majesty; with a golden girdle which speaks to us of His *perfect service* in the heavenly sanctuary. When our Lord was on earth He stooped to the lowest and most menial occupation when He took a towel and girded Himself, to wash His disciples' feet. John 13:4, 5. In the glory the girdle has become golden, but it is still there, showing Him as the *Servant,* divine, perfect, almighty, but ever occupied in serving His people. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and He ever liveth to make intercession for us. How it strengthens our hearts and nerves us for the fiercest conflict to know that Jesus in the glory is praying for us!

The hair of our risen, glorified Lord is represented as "white like wool, as white as snow"; manifesting His perfect knowledge, understanding and experience.

In Song 5:11 His hair is "black as a raven"; which shows Him in all the freshness, activity and vigor of youth. Both descriptions are needed to portray our gracious Lord; for He has all the strength and vigor of youth combined with the knowledge, experience and mature wisdom of old age. His *eyes as a flame of fire* represent the searching, refining and illuminating work of His Spirit. "His eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men." No secret has been or ever will be hidden from Him; "neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:13.

The *feet* of the Saviour are next described, John's look falling upon them after one glance at His eyes of fire. Those feet which are to crush the wicked and to tread down all His enemies, appear like burnished or glowing brass, heated in the furnace to a whiteness which is almost too bright for human eyes to rest upon. Brass is used in Scripture as a symbol of divine judgment; so we see here that our divine Saviour has trodden the furnace of God's wrath in our place and has accomplished a perfect salvation for us. Those glowing feet speak to us of His victory over Satan on Calvary's cross, and how there is no condemnation for us; as well as of the ultimate victory when He will utterly destroy all His enemies and subdue all things unto Himself. "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him; but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory

and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. 2:8-10.

His *voice as the sound of many waters* represents to us the infinite power, majesty and melody of the words which fall from His sacred lips. I have often sat at the foot of a great waterfall, listened to the roar of the mighty waters and meditated on the sweetness of the voice of Jesus. They tell us that there is every possible note of music in the sound of many waters; and certain it is that all the sweetness, tenderness, pathos and melody of the universe is included in the music of the voice of our heart's best Beloved.

"There is no voice like the voice of Jesus:
Tender and sweet its chime;
Like musical ring of a flowing spring
In the bright, summer time."

Reader, do you know that voice? Have you learned to be still enough to hear it and to let it permeate your whole being? Is there any joy greater than to hear Him whisper, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine"? Does He say in your heart more clearly each day: "Surely I come quickly"?

In His right hand John saw Him holding the *seven stars* (perhaps arranged as a garland or circlet of jewels) which are explained to be the messengers or ministers of the seven churches. See how the Lord values and cares for those who go forth to work for Him. However unworthy and insufficient you may

feel, if you go as the Lord's messenger to carry His Word and to testify of Him, He holds you as a star or a precious jewel in His right hand of power; none can pluck you thence and none can harm you. But note that you must take your right position as *in His hand* before you can be used by Him. The pen in the hand of a writer, the weapon in the hand of a soldier, and the tool in the hand of a carpenter, are all instruments by which something is accomplished; but the power or wisdom is not in the implement but in the hand that wields it. Thus the Lord can use those who are willing to remain as humble, yielded instruments in His hand: the power will be all of Him, and the glory will be all His.

Out of the mouth of the Saviour went *a sharp, two-edged sword,* even the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The bearing of a sword manifests our Lord in His official position as Judge, as well as Ruler of the universe. Hence we see that in this vision He is revealed to us not only as the Great High Priest, ever representing His people before God, walking in the midst of His churches to guide, cleanse, reprove and encourage them; but also as their Coming King and the righteous Judge. If you have never accepted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you will have to meet Him some day as your Judge. His Word is that which searches, convicts and condemns the sinner. "The word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb. 4:12.

As you go forth to work for God, the Sword of the

Spirit must be your offensive weapon. All human words may fail, but God's Word can never fail to be effective. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isa. 55:10, 11. You will find as you use it that it has *two edges;* while you are using it to pierce some one else, it will be cutting your own heart and life also. Happy those who live so constantly searched and cleansed by the Word that they can wield the Sword in the power of the Spirit to do mighty things for God. His Word is the weapon which will beat back and discomfit the powers of darkness; by it sinners will be convicted of sin and born again; and those who reject it will be judged by it before the Great White Throne. Jesus Himself said: "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world (that is, at His *First* Coming). He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my word, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:47, 48.

Then in one majestic sentence John sums up the whole appearence of his glorious Lord. "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." No human eye could ever bear the radiance of the noonday sun; still less could it gaze on the celestial splendor of the Sun of Righteousness. A story is told of one of the ancient Jewish rabbis, that a heathen emperor chal-

lenged him to prove that his God was greater than those of other nations. The rabbi took the emperor out into the blazing sun at noonday, and asked him to fix his gaze upon it. "I cannot," replied the monarch; "I cannot look upon it for it dazzles me." "That sun," said the Jew, "is but one of the creatures of our great Jehovah, made by His hands and governed by His will. If thou canst not even gaze upon the creature, what then must be the glory and majesty of the great Creator?" When in His humiliation as man, for a few, brief moments the divine glory of the Saviour shone forth upon the Mount of Transfiguration, we read that "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Matt. 17:2.

"When I recall the magnificent portraiture, the human form, walking majestically amid the golden furniture, clothed with a garment of royalty, girded with gold, crowned with flowing locks that reflect the light and purity of heaven, having a glance of electric fire, feet glowing with the liquid splendor of melted brass, a voice of majesty at which the earth and the heavens shake, the right hand lit with starry jewels, a mouth whose words carry their own execution in them, and a countenance as glorious as the noonday sun—when I survey such majestic lineaments, and such mighty powers, and hear the Possessor of them say: 'I am the First and the Last, the LIVING ONE; and I was dead, and behold, I am living for ever and ever, and I have the keys of death and of hades'—I say, when I bring all this before me, and try to realize it in my imagination, I am almost overwhelmed with the sublimity of the picture, and with the goodness and grace, and power

and might, with which the eternal Father hath invested the Person of Jesus Christ."—Seiss.

No wonder that John fell at His feet as one dead. Every time we get a vision in the Spirit of our adorable Lord, we shall be brought down a little lower into the place of death, each time more of the self-life in us being mortified, and the Christ-life triumphant. This vision of Jesus should be ever before us during this Gospel age. It is given to us to guide and direct us until He comes again. We should take a good look at it every morning, and we should learn by heart the message He entrusted to John for the seven churches in Asia; for these epistles constitute our Lord's last recorded letter to His church. The first three chapters of Revelation should be the best known and most frequently read of all parts of the Bible by those Christians who are looking for their Lord soon to return.

The seven churches in Asia are evidently typical of all the churches of all ages. Seven is the number of *dispensational completeness*: the number of God (three) added to the number of the world (four) to denote the perfection of all His dealings. When we come to *heavenly perfection* it is the number twelve (three *multiplied* by four) that predominates, as we see in later parts of Revelation. But here, in this dispensation of grace, we only see a measure of completeness, so the number seven recurs again and again. There are seven churches symbolized by seven lampstands of gold; and their seven ministers (angels) are represented by seven stars in the right hand of the Saviour. Each of His letters to the churches may be divided into seven distinct portions: (1) A description of one or

other of the divine attributes of Christ, pointing out His relation to the church addressed; (2) An assertion of His absolute knowledge of its history and doings; (3) A description of its actual condition; (4) The praise or blame which it merited; (5) A reference to His promised Coming; (6) A command to all to listen to the Spirit's voice; and (7) A special promise to the overcomers.

It has often been pointed out that these churches typify seven distinct periods of the church dispensation, and they have also been compared with seven periods in the past history of the Jews and with the seven great parables or mysteries of the kingdom in Matthew 13. As the object of this book is devotion and inspiration, and not prophetic research, we will only glance briefly at the historical aspect of these Epistles. *Ephesus* represents the period immediately following the days of the apostles, when in spite of orthodoxy and great activity, the love-light among Christians was beginning to burn low. *Smyrna* covers the time of the great pagan persecutions, when the church went through a furnace seven times heated, and emerged pure and unconquered from the fiery ordeal. *Pergamos* brings us down to the time of Constantine, whose professed conversion to Christianity made it a popular religion; when the church joined hands with the world, when the pagan mysteries were brought in, covered with a thin veneer of Christianity, and the rise of sacerdotalism became most marked.

Thyatira marks the age of the dominion of papal Rome, when the errors and worldliness which began in the Pergamos age came to a head. *Sardis* represents the time of the Protestant Reformation, when the church

was purified, errors turned out and ecclesiastical fetters riven. But though she had a name to live, much deadness remained in her spiritual experience, and the great promise of her early reforms was not fulfilled. *Philadelphia* brings us to the time of the great revival of missionary activity and spiritual life just before and during the nineteenth century; while *Laodicea* typifies the present age of apostasy and spiritual degeneracy.

But while we see these most evident marks of correspondence to the different stages in the church's history, we also find that the seven churches are found in every assembly. There is not a gathering of God's children in any part of the earth but will have some of its members who are in the position of Ephesus, others in persecution like Smyrna, others needing the exhortation given to Pergamos, and so on all down the list. Moreover, there is something in the experience of every individual believer corresponding to that of each one of these churches: their failures are the failures of us all; in their triumphs we all triumph. The temptations that beset them beset each one of us to-day: so we must not read these epistles as applying merely to those historical churches, but as being personal letters from our Great High Priest, addressed to each one of us individually, to warn us against the temptations we meet daily, and to show us how we may be *overcomers* and be ready to meet Him when He comes.

Ephesus was the leading commercial city of the Roman Province of Asia in those days: a place where Paul spent three years on his third missionary journey, where many mighty miracles were worked and triumphs of the Gospel recorded. Here Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, and from this great center

the Gospel he preached was disseminated into all parts of Asia. The apostle John later ministered here, and after his release from Patmos he returned here and labored until his death. It is probable that Mary the mother of Jesus also spent her declining years here. Apollos, the eloquent evangelist, was converted and labored here; and Timothy, Paul's beloved son in the Gospel, was a faithful bishop of Ephesus, where he was ultimately murdered by the mob. The name Ephesus means *relaxation,* and its church is reproved for a waning of her early love. Pre-eminent in activities and unreproachable in doctrine, her Lord had to say to her with sadness, "Thou no longer *lovest* Me as thou didst at first."

The great Master is looking down into all our hearts, as He walks in the midst of His churches to-day. What does He see there? Perhaps we are busier than ever in outward service, spurred on to increased activity by the thought of the nearness of His Return; but what about the *love* of our hearts? What about the times of secret communion with our best Beloved? Has He to say to us as He said to the bride in the Song: "The companions hearken to thy voice: *cause me to hear it"?* If so, let us hasten to His feet in true contrition, and ask Him to give us such a fresh vision of Himself and of all He has done for us shall fill our hearts once more with adoring love. It will not be enough when He comes for us to be found busy and active in His service: *nothing makes up to the Bridegroom for a lack of love in His bride.*

The promise to the overcomer in Ephesus is that he shall *eat of the Tree of Life.* This carries us back to the Fall of Man, when he was shut out from that Tree

which is a type of Jesus, the Life and sustenance of His people. These wonderful promises to the overcomers give us a picture of the whole Christian life, beginning with the partaking of Jesus, the Tree of Life, and leading us on until we sit with Him on His throne. Just as in Adam the whole race fell, and every one of us has forfeited the right to life eternal, so by the victory of Jesus, the Last Adam, every believer who becomes joined to Him by faith recovers the right to eat of that tree of life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." John 17:3; 1 John 5:12.

Smyrna was a great city about forty miles northeast of Ephesus. It was the place where Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John, labored faithfully and was martyred in his old age. Here Irenaeus studied, and here broke out some of the bitterest persecutions on record, at one time fifteen hundred and on another occasion eight hundred together sealing their testimony with their blood. The name Smyrna means *bitterness,* and well does it describe the experiences of this church. Yet of all the seven cities here mentioned, Smyrna is the one which has persisted to this day, having still a large population and being the commercial center of the Levant. Ephesus is now a complete desolation, Pergamos and Sardis mere heaps of ruins, and the very name of Laodicea has perished; but Smyrna, the persecuted, still lives and flourishes. When Satan kindles sevenfold his fires of persecution, the Lord overrules them to purify and to refine His church, but He never allows her to be consumed. He here re-

veals Himself as the One who has passed through death and is now alive forevermore.

The promise to the overcomer in Smyrna is that he *shall not be hurt of the second death.* Many in that church had to suffer death of the body at the hands of cruel emperors and rulers; but our Lord assured them that these early potentates could do no more, and that the eternal death (or the lake of fire) should never hurt those who remained true to Him. "I say unto you, My friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that they have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." Luke 12:4, 5. To those who are in Christ Jesus death, like sin, is a conquered foe; and that which often causes death, viz., sickness, is also atoned for by the great Sacrifice on Calvary's cross. So as in the first promise we saw deliverance from the *law of sin* which shut man out from the Tree of Life; in this second promise we may trace our deliverance from the *law of death* (Rom. 8:2) through the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. Healing for all our sicknesses is provided in the atonement of Christ; and the overcomer must learn to live in victory not only in his spirit, but in his physical life also.

Pergamos lay forty miles north of Smyrna, and was a city of heathen temples, great universities and a royal residence. It was "Satan's throne" (R. V.) in a special sense, as being the headquarters of the pagan occult mysteries. Fanaticism was rife here, and doubtless the little group of Christians had often been mobbed and persecuted. Antipas and others had been faithful martyrs, and many were still standing true to

Jesus. But there were two dangers creeping in: first the subtle seductions of the world, compared to the teachings of Balaam as recorded in Num. 25:1-3; and secondly the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, or sacerdotalism. This was an undue exaltation of the priestly office, oppression of the laity and a blasphemous assumption of the mediatorial position by the priests, denying to the common people the privilege of free access to God. The word Pergamos means a *tower,* and we may trace here a sign of the undue self-exaltation of this church.

The Lord here reveals Himself as fighting against these errors with the sharp, two-edged Sword of His Word. His promise to the overcomer is that he shall *eat of the hidden manna,* and shall have a *new name* written on a *white stone.* There is a beautiful sequence in these promises. After we have received access to the Tree of Life and learned to have victory over sin and sickness, with strength to be faithful even unto death, we press on to know Jesus as the Bread of Life, the constant, daily sustenance of our spiritual life, and the power by which we work and witness. It is not the manna which fell daily in the wilderness which is here referred to: **that** typified the earthly life of Jesus, and was only temporary. But the *hidden manna* was in that golden pot laid up in the ark (Ex. 16:32-34; Heb. 9:4), and typified the Lord Jesus in His glory as the eternal food and sustenance of His people. The world cannot understand how a Christian can keep pure, strong and unflinching amidst Smyrnan persecution or subtle seductions such as those in Pergamos; but the secret lies in his feeding continually on the hidden manna, dwelling in the secret place with

his Lord. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that *eateth me,* even he shall *live by me.*"

The promise of the white stone has been referred to the Urim and Thummim (Lights and Perfections) or the beautiful stones which were kept in the pocket of the High Priest's breastplate, and by means of which he ascertained the will of God. There was also a beautiful custom practiced among friends in ancient times, when two young men would make a covenant of perpetual friendship. They would write a name upon a small pebble, and then break it in two, each retaining one half through life. This typified their *one heart,* though in two bodies, and often widely separated by distance. Whatever may be the primary reference of this symbolic promise, we may be sure it means for us a close, intimate revelation of the Lord Himself, of His character, and of His will, such as only the overcomer can receive. The *new name* is also a promise of bridehood, as we shall see later on. It is on her marriage day that a woman receives a new name.

Thyatira was a busy, commercial town about twenty-five miles southeast of Pergamos. From here came Lydia, the seller of purple, who was Paul's first convert in Europe, hearing the Gospel by the riverside in the city of Philippi. Acts 16:12-15. To this church the Lord reveals Himself with eyes like a flame of fire—searching, penetrating, convicting and all-consuming—and with feet like burnished brass. The eyes speak of conviction, the feet of comfort. He who searches out the sin in His church has fully atoned for it and will deliver every one who turns to Him in contrition.

The sins and errors which we saw creeping into Pergamos have come to full fruition in Thyatira. Here Jezebel, the false church (type of Rome and all other apostate systems) is seen at the height of her power, and the *deep things of Satan* (R. V.) have penetrated the assembly of God's saints. The name Thyatira means "she that is unwearied in sacrifices"—an evident allusion to the Romish church with her perpetually repeated sacrifices of the mass.

The promise to the overcomer in Thyatira is twofold, consisting of (a) power to rule the nations with a rod of iron (thus in Rev. 12:5 the body of overcomers are seen under the symbol of a man-child); and (b) the Morning Star, or the harbinger of the dawn, which tells us that the sun is about to rise. Here we see a further step in the overcoming life: power to rule, to crush opposition, to beat back the powers of darkness and to cast down the strongholds of Satan in the Name of Jesus. There may be here a reference to the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, which typifies for us the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, our entrance into the Rest of God. Heb. 4:1-11; Isa. 28:11, 12. The Morning Star is Christ Himself (Rev. 22:16 in) His manifestation to His church, or the company of overcomers. How specially applicable is this precious promise to the tried and tested saints amid the apostasy and evil of these last days. The Lord will not only keep them in a life of continuous victory and rest, far above all the turmoil and strife, but He will shortly come to catch them away, manifesting Himself as the *Morning Star* in the Rapture, while He will appear as the *Sun of Righteousness* in His Return to the earth to reign as King.

Sardis was a wealthy, prosperous city at the foot of Mount Tmolus, about thirty miles south of Thyatira. The word Sardis means *renovation,* and is very interesting in its connection with the Reformation, when the church was freed from many of the errors of Rome and renewed in outward profession. The church here is no longer permeated with error nor dominated by priestcraft, but she is in danger of falling into a cold, dead formalism, which the Master severely rebukes, representing Himself as the One who hath the seven Spirits of God (Isa. 11:2-4; Perfect intelligence and absolute justice), and who holds the seven stars. How it must grieve His heart when His messengers who are held by Him with such love and tenderness in His strong, right hand, fail in their love and devotion to Him and begin to do their work in a perfunctory, cold and formal manner.

Yet even in Sardis there are some who are holding fast; and the promise to the overcomer is that he shall be clothed in white raiment and his name shall not be blotted out of the Book of Life. In its spiritual application to our lives we may see the clothing with the raiment of needlework (Psa. 45:14)—the beautiful garments which the Holy Spirit is working out in the lives and characters of those who are to form part of the bride of the Lamb. This white-robed company of overcomers is not to be blotted out of the Book of Life, but to be honored and confessed by Christ when He comes in glory. There may here be a reference to their being acknowledged as *priests,* clothed in white like the priests and Levites who ministered in the temple of old. If so, there would be an allusion to the

ministry of *intercession,* which is a marked characteristic of the overcoming life.

Philadelphia lay about forty miles southeast of Sardis, and had a living, active and faithful group of believers, though they were in much persecution from the Jews. The name means *brotherly love,* and it is the church which specially teaches us preparation for the Rapture. Jesus revealed Himself to them as "He that is holy, He that is true (He will never fail to keep His promise to return), He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." This is the missionary church: and no wonder, for when we realize that the Coming of our Lord is very near we shall be filled with a burning desire to win souls for Him—as many as possible in the short time that yet remains. As we go forth with this end in view, it is specially comforting to see Him as the great Opener of doors before us.

Well do I remember the strength and inspiration received from a vision the Lord gave me just before entering a new land with His Gospel. I saw an opened door, and the devil seeking with all his strength to shut it. As I perceived that he was not succeeding in doing so, I looked more closely to find out the reason. Then I saw a golden cord coming down from heaven, not thicker than my little finger, which was holding that door open; and all the force that hell could bring to bear upon it did not avail to close it. Hallelujah! When the Lord opens, no one in earth or hell can succeed in shutting, and when He shuts, none can open. How important then for us to *enter* every open door He sets before us, lest the time should come when that door be closed and our opportunity to enter it

gone forever. We see in this very letter the solemn warning that we should not let anyone *take our crown,* or take our place in winning the souls which should have been *our* crown of rejoicing in the Day of Christ.

The promise to the overcomer in Philadelphia is threefold; (a) To be a pillar, fixed and established forever in the heavenly temple; (b) To have the Name of the New Jerusalem; and (c) To have the Lord Jesus Christ's own Name. Here is a beautiful picture of what it means to be the bride of the Lamb. Those who will have part in that glorious company will all be pillars—stablished, strengthened and settled in God, able not only to stand firm themselves but also to hold others up. They will also have the Name of the New Jerusalem, which is the bride herself, the symbol of a city, bring out the fact that she is a *dwelling place* for God. "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." 2 Cor. 6:16.

These overcomers will have an even greater privilege than the name of the bride, and that is the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Just as on the marriage day the bride renounces her own name and takes that of her husband, so in the Marriage of the Lamb there will be a gracious bestowal of the Bridegroom's own Name—His character, His attributes—to those who form His bride. "We know that when He shall appear, *we shall be like him;* for we shall see him as he is."

Laodicea was a city of some wealth which lay about fifty miles southeast of Philadelphia and very near to Colossae. Its name means *judgment of the people,*

and it describes the period of the apostasy in the last days, when the people constitute themselves judges of what is right and set aside the Word of God. The Lord reveals Himself to them as "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God." His all-searching eyes pierce through the hollowness and deception of the hypocrites, and His tender heart of love can find nothing to commend in this apostate company. So repulsive to Him is their proud indifference and lukewarmness, that He is on the point of spewing them out of His mouth. What a picture we have here of the professing church of these last days, rich and increased with goods in her own sight, but in His pure eyes "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." This is what higher criticism and modernism have done for those who have embraced them.

Yet even amid this awful apostasy and declension, there are found some overcomers. The highest privilege of all is promised to those who overcome in this darkest and most degenerate church. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Words fail to describe the glory of this exalted position. It is the place of the bride, united forever with her divine Bridegroom, sharing His home, His throne, His authority and His repose. Even in apostate Laodicea the Lord is still seeking to find a home; for His heart of love never ceases to yearn over all for whom He shed His Precious Blood. Still He stands outside the door, patiently knocking and seeking for admission. Dear reader, have you let Him in? He comes to bring gold to enrich you, rai-

ment to clothe you, ointments to heal you. Will you not throw open your heart's door, and welcome Him as your Saviour and King?

It seems to me that the most emphatic part of these seven epistles is the exhortation reiterated in each one: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." He is speaking through these solemn letters in a very special way in these last days. The message is addressed to all the churches, to all who profess and call themselves Christians. But in the ultimate it is each individual believer who must listen and obey. Have you an ear, or the spiritual capacity for hearing the voice of Jesus? The church as a whole may be turning a deaf ear to His tender pleading, but what are *you* doing? His Spirit is speaking to your spirit, He is seeking to come in and take full possession of you. What shall your answer be?

The very fact that we all possess an ear and are capable of hearing the voice of God constitutes a great responsibility from which not one can escape. The same great Creator who gave us the ear will one day call us to account for the way we have used it. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" Psa. 94:9, 10. We have been reading and studying together the very last letter which our risen, ascended Lord sent to us from the glory. It is a solemn letter, and full of reproof, warning and exhortation as well as of comfort and consolation. Let us not pass it by as if it had no concern for us. Let us seek every day to be more sen-

sitive to the Spirit's voice and more simple in our obedience to Him. Let us read and study His Word more, esteeming it more than our necessary food; and let us ever keep our inner ear open Godward, saying with little Samuel: "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."

CHAPTER XII

Let Us Hold Fast

"Since then, brethren, we have free access to the Holy Place through the blood of Jesus, by the new and ever-living way which he opened up for us through the rending of the veil—that is to say, of his earthly nature—and since we have a great Priest who has authority over the house of God, let us draw near with sincerity and unfaltering faith, having had our hearts sprinkled, once for all, from consciences oppressed with sin, and our bodies bathed in pure water. Let us hold firmly to an unflinching avowal of our hope, for he is faithful who gave us the promises. And let us bestow thought on one another with a view to arousing one another to brotherly love and right conduct: not neglecting—as some habitually do—to meet together, but encouraging one another, and doing this all the more since you can see the day of Christ approaching." Heb. 10:19-25, Weymouth.

A book's real value to us depends on the practical use we make of it. In this book we have been studying in the light of God's Word some of the signs of the times and the way prophecy is being fulfilled in the world around us. We have also turned back to His Word to see what our attitude should be towards our soon-coming Lord, towards our brethren in the church, and towards the needy world around us. The Scriptures reveal all this very clearly, and the words at the head of this chapter sum it up. Here are three main exhortations: (1) To draw near; (2) To hold

fast; and (3) To exhort one another. May the Lord teach us all to obey these three commands ere we lay this book down. They will enable us to live in such an expectant attitude that when our Master appears we shall not be taken by surprise, but shall be ready at once to give Him a glad welcome and to go in with Him to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The Lord Jesus died for us on Calvary's cross, and by that atoning Sacrifice the way into the Holy of Holies was opened for all. The rending of the temple veil from top to bottom when Christ died, typified the rending of His sacred body by the divine hand of God, even as a priest slays the sacrifice he is about to place on the altar. Thus when He had suffered the penalty for the sin of the world, there remained no more barriers between us and God. His justice was fully satisfied, our debt fully paid, and the right of access to Him as *sons,* in His only-begotten Son, our Substitute, was gained for every poor sinner who accepts Christ's finished work and rests his faith upon it.

Jesus not only died for us, but He rose again the third day, thus assuring us of our justification, and that God had accepted the sacrifice He offered on our behalf. He is now at the right hand of the Father as our Great High Priest, ever living to make intercession for us. We have believed on Him, have had our hearts cleansed by His precious blood from all sin, and our consciences now witness to us that "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8:1. In addition to this belief with the heart, we have also made public confession of our faith before men, by following the Lord Jesus into the waters of Baptism, and have had "our bodies bathed

in pure water." Seeing that all this is so, the apostle exhorts us to *draw near* with a true, sincere heart, and with a simple, childlike faith that does not waver, to dwell in the Holy of Holies, the very heart of God our Father in heaven, to which Jesus by His Spirit has given us access.

Never can I forget what the receiving of the Latter-rain Outpouring of the Spirit meant to me along this line. I was far away in the north of India, having been there a good many years, and only knowing by hearsay how God was pouring out His Spirit in this and other western lands. He had been awakening a great hunger and thirst in me for more of Himself, and had been dealing with me in a special way for months, humbling, searching and breaking me down lower and yet lower at His feet. Then when the Spirit came in in fullness as on the Day of Pentecost, it seemed to me as if He took me by the hand and led me into the very heart of God the Father, to show me how He was rejoicing over Jesus, the Son of His love. It was (as every new step in the Christian life is) a new vision of Jesus; but it was *from the point of view of the heart of God,* where the Holy Spirit told me I had now come to abide. This is the true home of the soul: the abiding place from which no power in earth or hell can pluck us out. Therefore let us draw near each morning, and let us abide there all through the day. Then as we go to rest, let us shelter afresh in that haven of the soul, that we may be kept safe during the hours of darkness and unconsciousness. Only as we learn to draw nearer and nearer every day, and to dwell in the heart of God, can we meet the fierce temptations which will shortly

meet us, and be more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

While we rest in that safe abiding place, there is a testimony which we must bear to the world around us; and this is referred to by the apostle here as *the confession of our hope* (R. V.), or the firm assurance that Jesus is coming again. This is the central point of our message in these last days. Therefore let no scoffers silence us, no seductive teachers deceive us and no shame deter us from holding firmly to this unflinching avowal of our hope. Let us proclaim it boldly wherever we go; that believers may be comforted and cheered and sinners warned to flee from the wrath to come. *He is faithful* who has given us the promise of His Second Coming; so let us be faithful in occupying till He come, and in doing the work He has left for us to do.

Our attitude towards our fellow Christians is also mentioned here; and we are exhorted to bestow thought and consideration on one another, not being satisfied with merely getting ourselves ready, but seeking to stir up every one with whom we come in contact to live in brotherly love and to let their light shine in a life of holiness. This will keep us from falling into the mistake of neglecting the public means of grace. Instead of saying (as some do) that we can have communion with the Lord at home and do not need to assemble ourselves with others, we shall all the more seek opportunities to meet with our brethren in order to help and encourage their faith. We see the Day drawing nigh, and all the signs of the last days fulfilled before our eyes: *now* is the time for us to obey this exhortation to spend our time in seeking to arouse

and stir up our brethren to be ready for the Bridegroom, with oil in our vessels and lamps brightly burning, when the midnight cry shall go forth.

"When God purposed to bring about a great event, He always made preparation beforehand—a preparation before the consummation—and that preparation meant salvation to those who watched and heeded. The Old Testament is full of such illustrations. The Ark was in preparation and it offered salvation, which was followed by and consummated by destruction to those who rejected the proffered salvation. There was preparation before the first advent of Christ, the preparation of Zachariah and his wife, the preparation of the people who were present at the birth of John the Baptist. They said among themselves, 'What manner of child shall this be?' This was followed by the question, 'Who art thou?' He answered, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.' This was the preparation for the ministry of the Lord of revelation. The same thing holds good regarding the descent of the Spirit. Christ gave forth the wonderful words of the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John, and the disciples were prepared for the office, for the ministry and for the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit. They were prepared for the coming of the Comforter. They were told to tarry, and they tarried. One day's preparation, two days' preparation, three days' preparation, and so on; and on the Day of Pentecost came the consummation. Preparation precedes revelation!

"The same holds good regarding the Lord's Second Coming. You have had years of preparation. When the Spirit fell in the latter days just as He was outpoured

on the Day of Pentecost, it was preparation on an intensified scale. It was the preparation of the road for His Coming. Again the word went forth, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord'; but instead of the herald voice of John the Baptist, it was the trumpet blast raised by young and old, rich and poor, 'Jesus is coming soon. Prepare ye the way.'

"Can you see that 'way' of John the Baptist's time? Do you see that stream from Jerusalem going out to the wilderness beyond Jordan? Look at that stream. What were they doing? Where were they going? To see a strange man with a strange message, heralding a greater Stranger. Watch them returning, every one changed. Some prepared by determining to bring forth fruits for repentance, and to be ready to receive the Messiah when He came. In some the seed lay dormant and revived on the Day of Pentecost, and later on when the five thousand were converted. Yes, every one came back changed, and some were hardened. They called him names, and said, 'He hath a devil.'

"A stranger messenger has gone forth—not John the Baptist with his loud voice in the wilderness, but the Holy Ghost Himself, in a voice that has been received just as John's voice was. John's message was believed by some and rejected by others, as he preached, 'Repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.' This is the message that is again going forth. Men have heard the strange voice, the strange tongue, and some have accepted it as from the Lord, and they have come down in repentance. Others, the religious leaders, as of old have read the Word and say not, 'He has a devil,' but 'It is of the devil.'

"The very voice of John the Baptist, the strange

language, the strange attire, the strange place, heralded the Coming of the Lord; so this strange voice, this strange speaking in tongues is a herald of the Coming One. The voice itself, its existence, its manifestation, is an indication of the nearness of the revelation of the Coming One. Oh, yes, there had been heralds, prophets, heralding the Coming of the Messiah; but John the Baptist was the immediate herald. He was a near relative, the cousin of the Messiah. God sent the cousin of the Son of God to herald His First Coming, but He is doing an even greater thing now. He is sending the Third Person of the Trinity, He is sending the Begetter of the Begotten to announce, not the birth from a woman, but a birth from the Throne, out from the cloud, the Second Advent of Him who comes not merely as the Son of man, but as the Lord of glory.

"God has chosen a worthy messenger of the worthy One, the Highest, to announce the arrival of the Most High. Hitherto God's people have underestimated, have not understood the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in its full significance. All the ministrations, the blessings, the revivals, the healings and the worship are subsidiary to the fact that He is preparing the way for the Advent of the Son of man.

"The Holy Spirit is preparing the way. What way? He is preparing a way in the hearts of men and women for the Coming of the Lord through the workings, the mighty workings of the Holy Spirit. The consummation of John's ministry was when He saw the Messiah, the Lamb of God, when he baptized Him and heard God's witness. The Holy Spirit will intensify His

activity as the time of consummation approaches. The consummation will be the revelation of the Son of man. When is He to come? You will be able to gauge the same when you see the intensified activities of the Spirit in the present outpouring. John's ministry finished when he finished that which he was sent to prepare—the way to the Lord. The Holy Spirit's present activity will not finish until He has finished in the hearts the work He has started. It will not be, 'Behold the Lamb of God' this time; but it will be, 'This same Jesus who went away is now coming in like manner.' "

God is bearing witness to His Word by the *signs following* in all lands, and sometimes in very remarkable ways. We read of more than a hundred denominational missionaries in the north of India receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost lately. Wonderful revivals are reported in Russia, in Poland, in parts of Canada, in England and in many districts of the United States. The following wonderful visions were given to a young brother in Sweden, who describes them thus:

"I had been speaking in tongues with interpretation shortly before, when suddenly the Spirit commenced to speak through me again, and a mighty power came upon me. We were admonished not to fear, for the great Lord Jehovah went before us. Then visions began to appear, though obscure, and with a thin veil over them; but some were more clear. I cannot remember the exact order in which the visions came; but after each one came a strong conviction of the soon coming of Jesus. Great fields of grain, white and ripe, appeared, and immediately there came a fine,

drizzly rain. Then I heard the Spirit of God saying that this is the great harvest time, and that the heavens in these days are open for the people of God. I believe it signifies that a great revival is coming, and is to sweep through the world. I saw the heavens open, and a great call sounded forth: 'Hearken, I am coming, I am coming.' Then I saw Jesus coming, and it was with such reality and made such an impression on me that I thought it was really so. At this time the Spirit called through me with a loud voice: 'Call out to My sleeping people, call again and again. See, I am coming, I am coming, I am coming very soon.' I was made to know that only a very few of God's people realize the nearness of His Coming.

"The next thing I saw was a multitude of people rushing down to hell. Great hosts of people literally went into an awful pit. The pangs and anguish that came on my soul at this moment, and the great love of God which He revealed to me are more than tongue can tell. With an unrestrained power a call sounded forth: 'Win them, grab them, hold them back, rescue them.'

"I thought myself as it were in the sky, and suddenly I saw how a company of people was snatched away. Not lifted—that is too slow—but literally snatched away to meet Jesus in a great cloud. But they who were ready and who were snatched away were not many. Then a question full of sorrow was asked: 'What shall be the fate of those who are left behind?' An answer came, full of horror, dread and solemnity: 'Holy wrath.'

"I seemed to be then in the desert, where I saw blood

flowing, men crying, women and children screaming, swords gleaming and heads falling. Pangs of real soul-suffering came upon me because of the fact that the children of God are sleeping in these days. Oh, what heart-rending sorrow was expressed in the words that were repeatedly called out under the power of the Spirit: 'My people are sleeping, My people are sleeping.'

"I saw the Jewish people going up to Jerusalem in great haste. I was then brought out on a great battlefield, where I saw a great and furious battle. From there I also saw a landscape, very dark and dreary, enveloped in dark clouds although at midday, and there were people running hither and thither as if in peril after a tornado. Then came forth the cry: 'His voice shall be heard, and then shall the earth be dissolved.' I saw the millennium also, a child among the beasts of the field, and these words came: 'My peace, My peace is like a stream.'

"Then came a prophecy of the whole consummation. I saw a great beast arise out of a horrible pit and shake himself in unspeakable chains with which he was tied. I perceived that a short but terrific catastrophe was taking place in the spiritual world, and the lake of fire into which the beast was cast was opened before my vision. This appeared exceedingly deep and dreadful.

"Next I prophesied of the white throne, I saw the heavenly host and heard them singing, and this searching question was put to each of us individually: 'Is the heavenly harmony ringing in your life?' Then I saw a great number of crowns most wonderful, but

under the crowns a stream of blood was flowing. Crowns and blood! Then came the words: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.'

"I saw much that I cannot recall. God's holiness was revealed in mighty power, and like a red thread through all the prophecy came these words: 'Blessed are they that are watching, blessed are they that are watching and praying: for I am coming soon, soon, very soon.' During these events two things of great importance were revealed to me. One thing is the Blood of Jesus Christ and its matchless power. I perceived the great and magnificent virtue of the blood in the spiritual realm as never before. It was a living revelation to me that *there is no other power that will make the adversary of our souls powerless like the blood of Jesus.* The evil one must flee before the power of the Blood. I was given to see the importance of living under the blood from day to day, as the devil is ever seeking to devour all those who walk in the Spirit.

The second thing which God gave me to know was the necessity of giving God all the glory for all that He is doing for us, in order for Him to complete His work in us. He said to me: 'The people that I have chosen shall declare My love.' If we are to dwell in the presence of the Holy Spirit it is necessary that our hearts be in an attitude of thanksgiving and soul-gratitude to God. Never before have I seen so clearly the importance of being humble and yielded to God, in order to be useful in the Master's service."

Sister Mary Chapman, writing from Travancore, India, tells of the wonderful way in which God de-

fended His own cause when a whole flood of literature defaming the Pentecostal Movement was being scattered over the south of India. The whole movement was attributed to the devil and many absurd and ridiculous things were written by our enemies, which no sane person would believe. Some of her workers wanted to answer these statements, but she advised them not to do so, saying that God would undertake and work it out in His own way. She writes: "Some of these pamphlets went to church members about five miles north of Rannee, at a place where no Pentecostal meetings had ever been held. It set them to thinking. So one young man determined that he would pray to God to reveal to him whether the Pentecostal Movement was of God or of the devil. He set himself to prayer and continued praying day and night to this end. Others were awaiting results as he prayed. He received much blessing, and the Lord gave him a most wonderful revelation of Himself, and filled him with joy. He kept on praying, and finally a mighty Baptism of the Spirit came upon him and he spoke in other tongues and magnified God. This was God's answer to his prayer. He testified joyfully to the others, and they began to seek earnestly for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, all Indian people, with no leader except the one who had just received. They put aside their differences, made wrongs right, enemies became reconciled, and God led them on.

"The power fell, and some fell on the floor. The dear brother who had received his Baptism was a little doubtful about that being just right, so they sent for a worker to come and teach them. Some of our workers went to them, and the result was that thirty-one

precious people received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, including a worker with his little congregation. This all took place while I was away at the hills. Nevertheless I am getting the credit of taking their members from that church; but I am sure I had nothing to do with it, unless by way of the Throne.

"He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him. A strange instrument to accomplish a strange end! He maketh the wrath of man to *praise* Him. Only God can make the impossible possible. How is it possible for the wrath of man, the anger, the spleen, to be turned to His praise? The reason is that man is finite and God is infinite. Man's resources are limited; he has just the circle, the range, the limited range of his wrath. But God! His range is infinite.

"See that stream coming out of the mountains—pure, sparkling, it flows on, obeying a divine, natural law, seeking its level. It passes through man's habitation, it is polluted, it is fouled, it is discolored. You say it is spoiled. No, no! It flows on, over sand, pebble, rock, and it emerges pure again—so simple, so easy; it just keeps on going.

"The divine providences seemingly are thwarted, hindered, diverted by the wrath of man. Seemingly the plans of God are annulled, but the purposes flow on. The stream may be diverted, polluted, discolored, but it still flows on. The diverted channel is the right channel, for it still reaches its destiny—the ocean.

"The wrath of man shall praise Him. See those high priests with Christ before them in their power. They are vehement, hateful, bloodthirsty. The stream of God's blessing to the world was diverted, was stayed

was stopped. It went underground through the rocky tomb, and came out the River of Life, the River of God. Christ before those priests and elders—bound, condemned, bleeding, scourged—was an exhibition of the wrath of man. That spectacle, followed by the sacrifice of Christ Himself, has meant salvation to the world, the undoing of the powers of darkness and their ultimate overthrow.

"Christ crucified and glorified is the divine epitome of the wrath of man praising God. 'Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.' Calvary, the grave, the throne, is an exemplification of every tragedy in the world when the wrath of man has attempted to overthrow the work of God. Every cross, every vexation, every onslaught of the enemy which the children of God have had all down the ages is only a reflex of the wrath of man inspired by the wrath of the dragon against God's Son and the sons of God. 'He who sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision.' Psalm 2:4.

"The wrath of man versus the might of God! Set the case fairly, don't magnify the wrath of man and lose sight of the praise that God can get out of it. The wrath of man is inspired by the wrath of the serpent. Take sides with God, who is making the wrath of man to praise Him. Then the wrath of man will work for your praise, because you are hid in Christ, and Christ is in God.

"Every time you see the wrath of man working in your daily circumstances, look twice to see how it is going to work for the praise of God and also for your benefit. Stephen was stoned: but the stones coming on him did not prevent him from seeing Christ standing at

the right hand of God. Stephen saw the vision; Saul heard the voice.

"In that tragedy we see the exhibition of the wrath of man upon Stephen. By the prayer of Stephen, 'Lay not this sin to their charge,' it was made possible that he who had charge of the clothes of the murderers had no charge against him. The charge was discharged against Saul by the prayer of Stephen. And, next to Calvary, Satan's kingdom had its hardest blow then, through the conversion of Saul. He became a missionary to the Gentiles, and turned the world upside down. He wrote the Epistles which have been the bulwark of the Christian faith for all ages. The wrath of man praises God. It has been, is now and will yet be praising Him, as long as sin remains."

As we turn to the signs of the times and the way in which God is making everything work out for the fulfillment of His Word, let us quote some reports which have come out just as we go to press (April, 1927). The official report on the administration of Palestine and Transjordania shows that while the neighboring State of Syria was in the throes of revolution and civil war, Palestine enjoyed peace and prosperity, together with a great advance in its Jewish population. In 1924 the Jewish immigrants were 12,850; but in 1925 they numbered no less than 33,800, bringing the total number of Jews resident in Palestine well above two hundred thousand. One half of these Jewish immigrants came from Poland, and the number entering during this year bids fair to be greater than ever.

"Lord Plumer, who has succeeded Sir Herbert Samuel (a Jew) as Governor of Palestine under the British administration, is the first Christian ruler that land

has known since the days of the Crusaders. One of his first actions on arrival at Jerusalem was one which delighted all sincere Christians. He learned that St. George's Cathedral lay on the road to Government House; so he stopped his procession and went into the church for a few moments to pray silently for God's guidance in his work. He much needs the prayers of all Christians, as his is a most difficult position. The Jews hope he will continue to support them as Sir Herbert Samuel did, while the Arabs hope that he will reverse that policy. The Druses (fanatical and heretical Moslem tribes in Syria) are causing much trouble, and Christians in their neighborhood are in much danger from their persecutions."

With regard to the unrest in all nations, the following suggestive article appeared recently in the Los Angeles Times: "Unrest, overturnings, changes, uncertainties, stalk darkly through many nations. Before crushed endeavors and broken ideals the League of Nations falters. Upon four continents the dragon's teeth are sprouting sabers and bayonets. The hemispheres are bathed in the red of a setting sun. Civilization halts and shudders in its onward march. The stagnant Orient steers mutteringly against the encroachment of the advancing Occident. French mobs stone Americans and jeer at the traditional friendship of the nations, while France is tottering towards bankruptcy and repudiation. In the Far East the Philippines clamor for independence, while rival world powers wait to fall to blows over the possession of the islands the moment they forsake the protection of America. Religious riots are spilling blood in the streets of Calcutta, while Hindus, Mohammedans, Brahmans, Buddhists, Parsees

and Aryans only wait for the lifting of the restraining 'white hand' to fly at each other's throats. Earth's oldest city, Damascus, lies in ruins where overlords and under-dogs have clashed. France turns from a Pyrrhic victory in Morocco to fresh conflict in Syria. Egypt elects an abetter of assassins to premiership at Cairo, as a red rag to the British bull. In the southern half of the Dark Continent the menace of the colored race keeps Cape Town and Johannesburg isolated outposts of colonial imperialism. European democracies fumble and fail before financial emergencies."

The reports from war-torn China are heart-rending in the extreme. The country is being consumed with civil war, and the anti-foreign fever of the Chinese may at any moment precipitate an international crisis. The propaganda of the Russian Soviets has been so strong during the past year or so, that a British consul has predicted that within five years China will have gone "red." There are large companies of armed bandits, in some provinces far outnumbering the regular troops, so that the governors can do nothing to restrain them. Missionaries driven out of the interior tell of bandit gangs raiding one defenseless village after another, slaying ruthlessly men, women and children, and practicing the most horrible tortures on their helpless victims. We read of one town where the bandits had killed a thousand Chinese non-combatants, and the poor little children whose parents had been murdered went to the bandits and begged for food. These inhuman savages merely amused themselves by seizing the arms and legs of the smaller children and literally tearing them to pieces. They then stripped the older boys and girls, flogged, maimed, killed or threw them

to the animals, according to the caprice of the moment. Other horrors, cannibalistic and too terrible for publication have been told us by eyewitnesses. Oh, how China needs Christ! Nothing can solve her problems but the reign of the Prince of peace.

Japan is incensed at America's and Australia's refusing to give an outlet for her over-crowded millions, and her growing fleet of fast cruisers is becoming a menace to the countries that bound the Pacific Ocean. South America is trying to throw off the yoke of Rome (a mere thin veneer covering the darkest Paganism) and is fast becoming atheistic. Rumbles of revolution are heard in Nicaragua and other countries. Mexico has a religious war, and is now starting a campaign against foreign capitalists. England has been for months in the throes of a great coal strike; and though a million defeated miners have returned to work, their hatred against the mine owners augers ill for the future. Meanwhile the immense army of unemployed presents a tremendous problem to the rulers of Great Britain. Greece has had seven revolutions since 1916, Portugal also has had quite a number, and the conditions in these lands as well as in Spain are far from stable. Trouble is brewing in Roumania and other Balkan countries. We read that in Russia "famine stricken children, afflicted with leprosy, are broadcasting disease in town and country." Even in the islands of Sumatra and Java we read of trouble brewing, of communist uprisings and Mohammedans preparing for a "holy war."

Mr. Philip Mauro in "The Last Hour" tells of the recent return from Europe of "the head of one of our greatest chain-store systems" who speaks enthusiastic-

ally of the wonderful changes that have taken place in Italy under the Fascist regime, and expresses great admiration for Mussolini, who, he declares, "has worked wonders." Further he reports that wherever he went "all were wishing their country had a Mussolini."

"No recent happening in the world's political affairs," says Mr. Mauro, "is of greaterr import than the rising of a dictator at the seat of the ancient Roman Empire. And now we are confronted with the astounding fact that Italy's political reaction is viewed by those who live in the adjacent democracies of Europe, not with horror, or even with aversion, but rather with envy. The civilized and progressive nations of the world are supposed to be passionately devoted to democracy, which commonly is extolled as the final and finished product of evolution in the political department of human affairs.

"How then can our wise men explain the extraordinary fact, that not only has Italy reverted to the long obsolete form of government by dictatorship, but other countries are envying the benefits that have already accrued to her and are expressing dissatisfaction with their flabby parliamentary system? It is also observed and frequently pointed out that Premier (or more accurately Dictator) Mussolini is ever seeking by his public utterances and acts to revive amongst the Italian people the spirit of the old Roman Empire. Moreover his efforts in that direction are meeting with such success as to justify the belief that we are now not far from the fulfillment of the scripture, 'and all the world wondered after the beast.' Rev. 13:3.

"The significance of the great political change that has taken place in Italy is enhanced by two other de-

velopments that are proceeding parallel therewith: (1) The stabilization of the League of Nations, and (2) The steadily increasing prestige of the papacy as a political power. All of which indicates that we are nearing the fulfillment not only of Revelation 13, but of Revelation 17 also."

Thus we see on all sides preparations for war, unrest, perplexity, suffering and chaos. Civilization is heading for a crisis that will be the most terrible yet known to history. The only thing that can solve the problem of the nations is a great world-wide revival, and this is what we should awake and cry to God for. The world is crying out for a *superman* to solve its problems: but the church of God is looking for a God-man from the glory, the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone can bring peace to this sin-blighted and war-torn earth, His reign of peace and righteousness alone can restore peace and prosperity and put an end to war and strife. But in the meantime He has told us to *occupy until He comes,* and to use every power He has given us to bring the knowledge of His Full Salvation to every creature. What are we doing to this end? Are we translating our heartaches over the pitiful condition of the world into earnest, prevailing intercession for every country on the globe? God tells us to ask of Him rain *in the time of the Latter Rain;* and it would well repay us to cease our many activities for a while in order to devote ourselves to intercessory prayer for a great, world-wide revival. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting

the coming (mar.) of the day of God. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Peter 3:11-14.

APPENDIX

Notes on the Song of Songs

Two lines of interpretation: (a) *Historical,* of the dealings of Jehovah with the nation of Israel; and (b) *Spiritual,* of the mutual love between Christ and His church. Following *this* line, we may see in this Song the story of the *maturing of the Bride of the Lamb.*

Analysis of the Song

Div. I. SPRING. ch. 1:1 to 3:5. *A Call to Separation.* Key word: "Come away." ch. 2:10.

Section 1. *The Unsatisfied Life and Its Remedy.* ch. 1:1 to 2:7.

Section 2. *Communion Broken. Restoration.* ch. 2:8 to 3:5.

Div. II. SUMMER. ch. 3:6 to 6:10. *A Call to Closer Fellowship.* Key word: "Come with me." ch. 4:8.

Section 1. *Unbroken Communion.* ch. 3:6 to 5:1.

Section 2. *Communion again Broken. Restoration.* ch. 5:2 to 6:10.

Div. III. AUTUMN. ch. 6:11 to 8:14. *A Call to United Work.* Key word: "Come, let us go." ch. 7:11.

Section 1. *Fruits of Recognized Union.* ch. 6:11 to 8:4.

Section 2. *Unrestrained Communion.* ch. 8:5-14.

Symbolism of the Song

Three speakers in the drama: (1) *Solomon,* or Prince of Peace, representing the Lord Jesus Christ. (2) *Shulamite,* or Daughter of Peace, the Bride, who is called away from the world with its allurements, and prepared for the Coming of the Bridegroom. (3) *Daughters of Jerusalem,* the companions of the bride, who yet have a lower Christian experience, and never enter into the position of full intimacy with or conformity to their Lord. *Four Mountains*: (1) Mountains of Bether, or separation. (2) Mountain of Myrrh, or Calvary. (3) Hill of Frankincense, or the empty tomb: the resurrection of our Lord. (4) Mountains of Spices, His Second Coming.

References to the Holy Spirit: These are seen in the vine, wine, raisins, mother's house ("born of the Spirit"), banqueting house, dove, turtledove, rivers, streams, pomegranate (fruit of the Spirit) and other fruits; also in the various flowers mentioned. Ointments, oils, frankincense, and all spices typify the attributes of Jesus, His Name, His character, and His matchless perfections. When seen in the bride they are *put upon her* by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

Gold signifies divine glory and perfection; *Silver,* atonement or redemption; *Myrrh* (an aromatic resin), the bitterness of suffering; *Aloes* (a perfumed wood, probably from India), the sweetness which accompanies sacrifice. (Aloes mentioned only four times, and in connection with myrrh. Psa. 45:8; Prov. 7:17; Song 4:14; John 19:39.) The *"time of the singing of birds"* and the *"voice of the turtledove"* in ch. 2:12 may refer to the praises of the Spirit in other

tongues through the lips which have been taken possession of by Him in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The ripening of the *fig tree* refers to the signs of the Second Coming (Luke 21:29, 30), the blossoming of the *Vine* to the perfect human life of the Lord Jesus, while the crushing of the grapes and the making of *Wine* speak of His Atoning Sacrifice and the Outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

The *clefts of the rock* are the soul's hiding-place in the Rock of Ages, and that Rock was rent on Calvary's cross. The *"streets and lanes of the city"* symbolize the assembly of God's people, and the *Watchmen* are the ministers.

MARKS OF IMMATURITY IN THE BRIDE

1. Talking much and listening little. Prov. 10:19.
2. Lack of Faith and Love (the "breasts" mentioned in 4:5; 7:3). 1 Thess. 5:8.
3. Envy, strife and divisions. 1 Cor. 3:1-3.
4. Inability to take in the deeper truths. Heb. 5:12, 13.
5. A love of selfish ease. Amos 6:1.
6. A desire to get instead of giving. Prov. 30:15.
7. An up and down experience, undependable. Gen. 49:4.
8. Lack of separation from the world. 2 Cor. 6:17, 18.

SOME MARKS OF MATURITY

1. Listening much and talking little. James 1:19.
2. Childlike faith and ardent love. 2 Thess. 1:3; Phil. 1:9.
3. Maintaining the unity of the Spirit. Eph. 4:1-7.
4. Capacity for digesting solid food. Heb. 5:14.
5. Willingness to work for souls. 2 Tim. 4:2.
6. A spirit of sacrifice. 2 Cor. 12:13.

7. A stable experience, rooted and grounded. 1 Peter 5:10.
8. Separation from the world and conformity to Christ. Rom. 12:1, 2.

I. The Spring Division

Section 1. The Unsatisfied Life and its Remedy. ch. 1:1 to 2:7

The bride speaks in ch. 1:2-7, longing for a closer and more intimate communion with her Saviour. We see here the heart-longings of a truly saved Christian who is seeking the Baptism of the Spirit. The *Kiss* for which she cries is symbolic of (a) Reconciliation (Luke 15:20; Gen. 45:15; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 5:10, 11; Col. 1:21; Heb. 2:17). (b) Intimate Friendship (1 Sam. 20:41). Wine represents the pleasure of the world: but the love of Jesus is better. His Name represents His character: all that He is to us and for us. It is like *Ointment* for five reasons: (1) Most precious and costly (1 Peter 2:7; Psa. 133:2; Mark 14:3). (2) Of sweet odor (John 12:3; Eph. 5:2). (3) Compounded of a variety of parts (Ex. 30:23-25; Col. 1:19). (4) Healing for sick souls (Acts 4:10-12). (5) Healing for sick bodies (Acts 3:16; Ezek. 47:12 mar.).

She says "Draw *me, we* will run." Thus when the Lord draws each of us nearer to Himself, we should bring others with us. Psa. 51:12, 13; 63:8. When she looks at herself she is black as the tents of Kedar, covered with black goatskins. But she remembers that the perfect righteousness of Jesus covers her, and *in Him* she is comely as the curtains of Solomon's temple, made of white linen embroidered with gold,

blue, purple and scarlet. The pure linen speaks of the humanity of Jesus, the gold of His divinity, the blue of His heavenly origin and character, the purple of His royalty and the scarlet of His sacrifice and precious blood-shedding. All the efficacy of the perfect life and atoning death of Jesus is imputed to the poor, black sinner who accepts His salvation by simple faith. Rom. 3:20-26. The daughters of Jerusalem speak in v. 8. We know this by their calling her "fairest among women." They give her good advice, telling her to seek the Good Shepherd in the pathway of humble service, among the under-shepherds who are tending the lambs of His flock. As she does this she finds Him.

The Bridegroom speaks in vv. 9-11, admiring the strength, fixity of purpose and disciplined obedience of His bride, as He compares her to a company of Pharaoh's chariot horses. Horses came from Egypt in those days, so Pharaoh's would naturally be the very best obtainable. Note that they were (a) Purchased at great price (1 Kings 10:28, 29; 2 Cor. 6:17; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18, 19). (b) Well housed (2 Chron. 9:25; Psa. 71:3; Mark 3:14; 1 Chron. 4:23). (c) Well provided for (1 Kings 4:28; Psalm 103:5; Phil. 4:19). The Lord wants us to have all the yieldedness and obedience, all the spirit and vigor of Pharaoh's horses; but it is to be the spirited obedience and the wholehearted subjection of those who serve in the freedom of love, and not the compulsion of force. Isa. 31:3; Psa. 32:9, 8; Ezek. 1:20.

The Bridegroom admires the beauties He sees in His bride—"rows of jewels" should be as in the R. V

"plaits of hair"—a type of subjection and separation unto Himself. Num. 6:5. He then promises to add to these adornments by making her borders (or circles, meaning a crown) of gold with studs of silver. See Ezek. 16:12, 13. An old translation of v. 11 gives it: "A crown which is of gold *We Three* will make for thee." The Three Persons of the blessed Trinity are concerned and active in the perfecting of the bride and fitting and adorning her for the Marriage Day.

The bride speaks in vv. 12-14, pouring out the spikenard of her love and gratitude at the feet of her Beloved, and comparing Him to a bundle of fragrant myrrh clasped to her breast, or in her heart, all through the night of this dispensation, while He is absent. Camphire is "henna flowers" in the R. V.—beautiful clusters of creamy-white blossoms, which were very fragrant, and were used by oriental women to deck their persons. Engedi was famous for them. We should carry about the fragrance of Jesus with us wherever we go.

The Bridegroom speaks in v. 15, admiring the look of trustful love which is His Spirit's work in the bride. It is one characteristic of the dove that it cannot rest apart from its mate, but in its absence sits solitary and coos mournfully till its return. Doves are remarkable too for their faithfulness to one another and to their homes, to which they will return from long distances if they have been taken away; and also for their ready forgiveness of injuries. Are we like doves in all these respects?

The bride speaks in ch. 1:16 to 2:1. She gives all the praise back to her Beloved, as her beauty is only

a reflection of His holiness put upon her by His Spirit. She describes the green couch where she is lying with Him (the green pastures of His Word), while overhead are the majestic cedars and firs forming the beams and rafters of God's cathedral of nature. The cedars may typify the strength and majesty of the Manhood of Jesus, and the red fir His Blood and Atonement. Eph. 2:21, 22. She compares herself to the humble rose of Sharon, or the autumn crocus, which grows in wild abundance on the Plain of Sharon; also to the lily which grows in the lowly valleys and is trodden under foot of the passers by.

The Bridegroom speaks in v. 2, saying that even if His love is such a humble little flower, still there is as much difference between her and others as between the spotless purity of the lily and the pricking blackness of the thorns that surround it. They tell us that in Palestine nowhere do lilies so grow and thrive as in the neighborhood of thorns (Matt. 10:16; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 5:19). Let us learn the following LESSON FROM LILIES: (Luke 12:27; Hos. 12:5):

I. Characteristics of the Lily: (1) Its growth in the valleys (Song 2:1). (2) Its life among thorns (Song 2:2). (3) Its Beauty (Matt. 6:29). (4) Its Fragrance (Song 5:13).

II. The Lily Life of Jesus (Isa. 53:2). (1) Its hidden spring (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12). (2) Its gentleness (Matt. 9:22, 36). (3) Its humility (Matt. 20:28; Luke 22:27; John 13:3-5). (4) Its fragrance (John 6:38; 8:29). (5) The pricking of the thorns (Mark 8:12; 15:17; Luke 11:53, 54).

III. Lessons from the Lily: (1) Trust in our Fa-

ther's care (Matt. 6:30). (2) Humility (Matt. 11:20). (3) Beauty (Psalm 45:11, 13; Hosea 14:5, mar). Lily Psalms: 45, 69, 80. (4) Fragrance (Song 1:12; 6:3). He gathers the lilies from His garden (Song 6:2) that they may adorn His temple (1 Kings 7:22).

The bride speaks in vv. 3-6, comparing her Beloved to the fragrant, fruitful and nourishing Apple tree. She rests in His shadow and feasts on His dainties, the spiritual sustenance which makes her strong and active in His service. In v. 4 we come to the Banqueting House experience, or Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Lord here raises His banner over her—the banner of the heavenly country of which she is a citizen. The King of that country will avenge all injuries done to those who are under His banner. In v. 5 we see the overwhelming "weight of glory" which the fullness of the Spirit brought to her. "Flagons" should be "raisins," as in the R. V.—another fruit of the vine. She is sick and weak from the greatness of the glory: but to strengthen her, *more* of the same Spirit's work is needed in her soul. The moment she calls for His strengthening and sustaining, she senses (v. 6) the hands of her Beloved embracing her and enclosing her in that safe retreat; His presence between her and the world around.

The Bridegroom speaks in v. 7, charging the companions by the rose and hinds (a type of Himself) that they never disturb His loved one nor take her away from her resting place in His love. By comparing Himself with the rose and hinds He refers to His varied activities and His continual work for His church, beginning from Calvary's cross, where He is represent-

ed as "the Hind of the morning" (title to Psalm 22), through His Resurrection and present life of intercession in the throne, on to the Second Coming, when He will be like a roe or a young hart as He appears again in glory. Ch. 8:14. He charges the virgins by all that He is doing, has done and will do, not to hinder His bride in her pressing on after Him, entering into the life of closer communion. And it is not merely that He will deal with and punish those who hold back His following ones (see Psa. 105:15); but there is also a veiled invitation, a tender pleading with the virgins to come themselves. It is as if He would say, "Think of all I have done and am doing for you. Mine is a life of ceaseless activity, and I am calling you to progress, to a following hard after Me. Do not seek to hinder the one who is pressing on, but come yourselves and seek Me with her." Thus closes the first section of the first division.

Section 2. Communion broken. Restoration.
ch. 2:8 to 3:6

Here a change is seen. In v. 7 we left the bride reposing in the Banqueting House in the arms of her Beloved, while He charged the companions not to awaken her. But alas! she seems to have rested too much in her new-found experience and become unwatchful. As in the case of Jesus Himself, the Baptism of the Spirit is usually followed by a period of special temptation, a "wilderness experience." Here the bride, instead of using the Sword of the Spirit and overcoming the tempter, as Jesus did, seems to have allowed the "little foxes" (v. 15) to creep in and spoil the vine, or the Spirit's work in her life. The chief cause of the breaking of the communion

with her Bridegroom here seems to be a secret conformity to the world: she is on the wrong side of the wall (see Rev. 21:12, where the "wall great and high" represents the *separation* of the bride from the world); she is inside a house while the Lord is outside the windows (in v. 9 "He looketh forth" is correctly translated in the R. V., "He looketh *in*"), and instead of the face-to-face communion there is a lattice between her and Him, so that she only sees glimpses of His face.

The bride speaks in vv. 8-10, and from vv. 10-15 she is quoting His words to her, pleading with her to come out from the world. He gives a beautiful description of springtime, showing His desire for her to *grow* and develop in the spiritual life, even as all nature does in the spring. He calls her "my love, my *dove*," referring to His Spirit's work in her. Though she has not yet come out in entire separation to Him as He longs to have her, still she is indwelt by His Spirit, the dove. In v. 14 He shows her how she needs to take more time in secret communion with Him, how it is she who has broken the fellowship by her own voluntary will (compare "until *she* please" v. 7, R. V., mar.), and that He never desires to leave her. In v. 15 we see that it was the little foxes of carelessness and love of the world that were spoiling her life in the Spirit.

The bride speaks in vv. 16, 17 comforting herself with the thought that she knows her Lord and belongs to Him, that she can find Him where He feeds His flock among the lilies; and she tells Him that until the day be cool (R. V.), or until the evening,

He may stay away upon the mountains of Bether, or separation. We often do this when the Spirit calls us to pray and we put it off until evening, that we may occupy ourselves in other things, thus grieving the Holy Spirit.

In ch. 3:1-4 the bride continues speaking, telling how when the evening came and she was longing for the presence of her Bridegroom, she could not find Him, for His Spirit had been grieved and He had gone away. But she was so truly *His* that she could not rest without Him, so she went forth to seek Him. The watchmen evidently gave her good advice, but she had to pass on beyond them until at last she found her Beloved. Then she returned to the "mother's house" of the Spirit's instruction, and reposed once more in the embrace of her Bridegroom. In v. 5 He speaks again, charging the companions not to awaken her from her rest in His love. This ends the first or Spring Division.

II. The Summer Division

Section 1. Unbroken Communion. ch. 3:6 to 5:1.

The Daughters of Jerusalem speak in vv. 6-10, describing the bridal procession, as the Bridegroom is bringing His loved one in the royal palanquin through the wilderness of this world. Jewish interpreters take the litter of v. 7 to be a description of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and the chariot of v. 9 to be Solomon's Temple. In any case every detail of both speaks of *Jesus,* for we are *in Him,* and it is in His own sweet presence that He carries us. The "pillars of smoke" tell of sacrifice reduced to ashes (Psa. 20:3, mar.; Rom. 12:1), and the spices of the fragrance of the attributes

of Jesus. 2 Cor. 2:15. These fragrant spices are all found in desert countries. Heb. 12:11. The valiant men may signify the heavenly hosts which guard His people. Heb. 1:14.

In a spiritual sense we may see the litter (or bed, v. 7) as representing the humanity of Jesus, and the chariot His deity: one metaphor is piled upon another to describe the glories of Him who is above and beyond all human language to describe, and whose gracious presence surrounding His bride carries her along in safety to glory. "Bottom" in v. 10 should be "seat." Mercy-seat. Communion. I John 2:2.

The bride speaks in v. 11, from the chariot in which she is riding with her Beloved. She bids the daughters of Jerusalem to behold HIM in the glory of His great sacrifice on the Cross. His mother humanity ("Son of *man*") crowned Him with thorns (Matt. 27:29), yet even that act of mockery was a testimony to His essential royalty; and by that sacrifice He betrothed to Himself His bride, purchased by His own Precious Blood. 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Heb. 12:2; Luke 22:15, 28; Heb. 13:12-14. How precious is that Espousal Crown of thorns to every blood-purchased soul!

The Bridegroom speaks in ch. 4, describing the beauties of His bride, perfect through *His* comeliness. Ezek. 16:14. The dove's eyes we have already noted in ch. 1:15. We also saw the hair in ch. 1:10 as a mark of her separation unto Himself. Num. 6:5. The black hair lying in curly ringlets on the side of her shapely head is compared to a flock of goats with their black, silky hair lying on the side of Mount Gilead. The hair may also typify the consecration of the higher

powers of reason and intellect unto Him, and of her absolute subjection to Him who is her Head. 1 Cor. 11:3, 4, 10, 15.

The teeth symbolize the power to masticate or appropriate God's Word. Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 3:1-3; Rev. 10:9, 10; John 6:35, 37. They are a beautiful picture of *faith*: even, regular, clean, unblemished, and with none lacking. 2 Tim. 2:15. They are spoken of here as *sheep,* feeding in the green pastures; and they are *ewes,* or female sheep, which typify fruitfulness. The "lips like scarlet" speak of perfect health. Contrast this with the thick, swollen, white and scurfy lips of the leper. There is a similar difference between the *words* of those who are controlled by the Spirit of God and those who say: "Our lips are our own." Psa. 12:4; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:8, 16; 4:6.

"There is a scarlet line running all through the Bible, which constitutes the life-giving power of its words, telling as it does of the poured-out life, of the atoning blood, of the sacrificial death of Him who by His life and death has "brought life and immortality to light" for us (2 Tim. 1:10); who by His atonement has reconciled us to the Father; whose blood cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:7). There will be no comeliness in our speech in the sight of God, and no life-giving power in our words to man, if the scarlet thread is wanting. There may be much human excellency of speech (1 Cor. 2:1), but the excellency of the power will be of man and not of God."

The temples in Scripture refer to either the boldness or modesty of a woman. "Within thy locks" should be translated, "behind thy veil," thus speak-

ing of the perfect modesty, humility and reverence of the bride, while the red and white of the cut pomegranate refer to her spotless purity and the spirit of sacrifice. 1 John 3:16. Her neck is described as a tower or fortress, no longer under a yoke of bondage (Gal. 5:1), but living an overcoming life, filled with holy boldness and courage, and protected by the whole armor of God. Eph. 6:10-20; Prov. 1:8, 9; 6:20, 21. This passage is a message to Bible students, especially in the study of Doctrine. As you search out the precious truths on the various doctrines of the Word, you are taking up one piece of this heavenly armor after another, polishing it and hanging it up in your armory, and keeping it ready for use in time of need. See to it that you have offensive as well as defensive weapons; and also hang up in your armory trophies of victories you have already won, in the form of notes of praise and adoration, ascribing all the glory to the great Captain of your salvation. 2 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:37.

The breasts of the bride are the *faith* and *love* shown in 1 Thess. 5:8. These graces are the marks of maturity and they grow simultaneously. The more we trust the Lord, the more we learn to love Him, and the more we love Him the more we can trust Him. This double breastplate may be compared to that of the High Priest (Ex. 28:15-39) in which were kept the sacred stones (Urim and Thummim, or Lights and Perfections) by means of which the Israelites inquired the mind of the Lord and received guidance. In Eph. 6:14 it is called the breastplate of *righteousness,* and this will be the outward manifestation of a life that is filled with faith and love towards God.

The working out of the faith and love are beautifully described in Eph. 3:14-19; Col. 1-4; 1 Thess. 1:3.

The Lord has thus described seven points in the beauty of His bride: (1) Eyes (2) Hair (3) Teeth (4) Lips (5) Temples (6) Neck and (7) Breasts. He has also drawn seven comparisons or similitudes from nature: (1) Doves (2) Goats (3) Ewes (4) Scarlet Thread (5) Piece of a Pomegranate (6) Armory of David, and (7) Two young Roes. In v. 6 He refers to His going to the Mountain of Myrrh (Calvary) and the Hill of Frankincense (Resurrection, or the empty Tomb) and spending the day there with his his bride—"until the day be cool" (R. V.)—that is until the evening—John 9:4. We see here, right in the very heart of this Song, that it is only through His atoning death on the Cross that His bride can be matured. She was purchased by His Precious Blood, and never can she get beyond its efficacy, for by virtue of it she receives the Baptism of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, and all the heavenly graces and adornments which are to prepare her for the glory. See John 12:24-26.

In v. 7 He sums up the perfections of the beauty which is His own and which He has put upon His bride—"all fair." 2 Cor. 5:17. The spiritual sacrifices must be without blemish: there is to be *no spot* but such as is "the spot of His children," the distinguishing marks which He puts upon them when He seals them by His Spirit. Deut. 32:5; Lev. 21:17-21; 22:18-24; Eph. 5:25-27. In v. 8 He calls His loved one to an even closer walk with Himself, as she looks from the top of the high peaks of the Lebanon range, whence she can see the home she has

left, and also the city home to which He is leading her, These mountain peaks may represent the highest things on earth, the best that this world can give; but those who go on with the Lord must go higher still, and have their citizenship in heaven. Phil. 3:20. The name Lebanon means "white mountain"—referring to the snow which crowns its highest peaks. Amana means "security," Shenir or Senir is the Amorite name for the whole mountain of Hermon. Deut. 3:9. Hermon means "sacred." The high places of earth may seem very beautiful, but there lurk the enemies in their hidden lairs. The devil is represented here as the lion in his fierce, open bold attacks, and as the leopard in his sudden, swift, stealthy dealings. 1 Peter 5:8; Rev. 13:2.

In v. 9 He sees one look of trusting love directed to Him by His bride, and He at once exclaims, "Thou hast given Me courage (R. V., mar.) with one glance from thine eyes." It is as if she said to Him like Jonathan's armorbearer in 1 Sam. 14:7, "Do all that is in Thine heart; behold I am with Thee according to Thine heart." How wonderful to think that by a look from the "dove's eyes"—that is a humble, trustful surrender of *all* to Him in the power of the Spirit —we can bring joy and encouragement to His heart. The word "ravished" or "heartened" is used only here.

In v. 10 He uses for "thy love" a word which literally means *caresses,* endearments or tokens of love. Though she is not speaking, yet she is all the time pouring out her heart's love and adoration to Him; and to Him it is better than all the wine of earth. Her ointments are poured out at His feet (ch. 1:2, 3, 12; John 12:3), and He esteems this offering of

adoration and praise as better than the fragrant things of the world.

In v. 11 He compares her words of sweetness to the droppings of honey from the comb. "The honeycomb drops but sometimes; but it always hangs full of honey, its sweet drops ever ready to fall. Prov. 10:19; 15:23; 16:24; Deut. 32:2. But ere there can be the dropping of the honeycomb from our lips, there must have been the diligent gathering of the honey from flower to flower. And this must be done by feeding on the Word of God for ourselves, hiding it in our hearts, and eating it." Psa. 19:10; Jer. 15:16. The honey for sweetness and the milk for sustenance are both found in the words of the bride, and both are under her tongue, that is *in her heart*. Matt. 12:34; Psa. 119:11; Prov. 16:23. The smell of her garments refers to the custom of oriental women to perfume their clothing with costly oils, so that their every movement sends out sweet odors. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the *clothing* of the bride of Christ (Judges 6:34, mar.; Luke 24:49), and every baptized Christian should exhale the sweetness of the attributes of Jesus in his everyday life and conversation. The "smell of Lebanon" seems to sum up all the best and most fragrant odors: not merely that of the cedar, but also of the growing trees, the grasses, the shrubs and the beautiful, balmy atmosphere of summer, laden with a thousand fragrant flowers.

In v. 12 He compares her to a *garden enclosed*. The Jews interpret this to mean Canaan, or the Promised Land. To the Christian it represents the experience of what Canaan typified, viz., the Baptism of the Holy

Ghost. "Every garden at its beginning was but a piece of waste ground, taken possession of and enclosed by the purchaser, who by this act of enclosure set it apart as his own indisputable property, to be planted and cultivated by him for his own enjoyment or his own use. And even so the Lord hath *set apart* him that is godly for Himself (Psalm 4:3); and we who have been purchased by Him (Acts 20:28), reclaimed from waste by Him, planted and sown by Him (Isa. 61:3), are enclosed ones, walled round and barred (v. 12, mar.), to make us secure and proclaim to the world His appropriation of us. And what a wonderful enclosure our Master has raised round about us! We are *shut up,* not only *for* Himself, but *in* Himself." Zech. 2:5; 9:8, R. V., mar.; Psa. 125:2. The spring is shut up and the fountain sealed at its *source* to keep it from defilement or contamination from outside; but it afterwards flows out to refresh and fructify other gardens. v. 15. In vv. 13 and 14 we have a beautiful description of an oriental garden in summer, with types of all the fragrant and beautiful attributes of Christ which the Spirit brings forth in His bride.

In v. 16 He calls to the North wind of affliction to awake (note that He keeps it asleep) and to the south wind of prosperity and comfort (which He has always awake and ready) to blow from time to time, each as it is needed, that the heavenly spices, the attributes and qualities of the Bridegroom Himself, may be shed abroad from His bride, who is His garden. Some think that the whole of this verse is spoken by the bride. Be that as it may, it is certain that she speaks in the last clause, beseeching her Beloved to come into His

garden and partake of the fruits of His Spirit's life in her.

Historically we may trace in the north wind the sufferings of the Cross of Jesus, and in the south wind the joy and comfort of His Resurrection and Ascension, as a result of which the Spirit was poured forth on the Day of Pentecost. And He came as a "rushing mighty *wind,*" withering the goodliness of the flesh (Isa. 40:7), imparting new life (John 3:8); and bringing forth the fragrance of Jesus in those whom He filled. Acts 2:2, 4; 4:13. There was a great cry going up to God for the First Coming of the Messiah (Luke 2:25, 38): even so in these last days there is a cry going up for His Return—"Let my Beloved come!" Rev. 22:17, 20. The Lord's Supper, when He eats His own pleasant fruits and shares them with the redeemed members of His bride, is the beautiful link between the two Comings. 1 Cor. 11:26; John 6: 53-58; Rev. 3:20.

In ch. 5:1 the Bridegroom at once responds to the invitation of His bride: "I am come!" Historically we may see in this verse a description of the human life of Jesus at His First Coming, and of the joy and comfort He received in doing the will of His Father; while drinking the bitter cup of suffering, He still had the *joy* set before Him. Heb. 12:2. Thus in each individual member of the bride the Lord finds myrrh (bitterness) as well as sweetness. Yet He delights in the fruits of His Spirit's work in her, not only in the produce of the garden, but also in the more substantial honey and milk (see ch. 4:11) and the wine of the Spirit to make His heart glad. Psa. 104:15;

Luke 24:42, 43. And He calls to others to partake with Him: "Eat, O friends!" The Baptism of the Spirit is not primarily for our own enjoyment but *to make us a blessing to others.* It is the POWER FOR SERVICE, the enduement by which we may win other souls. It was the failure to realize this which caused a second break in the communion between the Bridegroom and the bride. All through this section we have seen unbroken communion, and He has been leading her on to step after step of blessing and usefulness; but she is so taken up with her own individual life, and the secret fellowship between herself and Him so absorbes her, that her vision is not yet enlarged as He desires it to be. Thus when He calls in *others* to partake of the feast she has prepared, saying, "Eat, O friends," she at once cries out: "Drink, yea drink abundantly. *O Beloved,"* as much as to say, "It is all for Thee, my Beloved, not to be shared with others." Thus closes the first section of Division II.

Section 2. Communion again broken. Restoration. ch. 5:2 to 6:10.

The bride speaks in vv. 2-8, reciting the sad story of how the Lord came to her at night, busy in His work of saving souls, in which she was called to join Him, and found her too occupied in her own rest and enjoyment of His gifts to let Him in. In the same way the disciples failed Jesus when He took them to watch with Him in His agony in Gethsemane. Matt. 26:40. In v. 2 we see the bride composing herself to rest. She is not backslidden, for note how the Lord describes her as His "undefiled"; but she is resting in her selfish ease and enjoyment, instead of following

Him in a pathway of sacrifice and lowly service for the lost. This is what Satan tries to work in all of us, especially those who have the Baptism of the Spirit. Christ desires to lead her on into this deeper fellowship with Himself, not only for enjoyment but for service and soul-winning; and thus He tenderly, patiently calls her. He reminds her of what He has been going through for her and for others, of all it cost Him to redeem her. He not only went out into the cold night when His head was filled with dew, but in the Garden of Gethsemane He shed those "drops of the night" in His agony and bloody sweat.

In v. 3 we have her response, in her condition of ease, half sleeping and half waking. She is afraid of the soiling of her feet, which may typify the reproach of Christ (Heb. 13:13); and she is too indolent to gird on her coat again, which would signify readiness for service, even in the night. The coat and the shoes are part of the "whole armor," which means the Baptism of the Spirit (Eph. 6:10-18); and her attitude here shows that she was not carrying out the purpose of that glorious experience, but had *taken off* some parts of the armor. Prov. 6:10, 11.

In v. 4 we see the Lord stretching forth His hand to deal in chastening with His loved one, and putting His fingers upon the door, that which separated her from Him. Heb. 12:5-11; 1 Cor. 11:32. "My heart was moved for Him" (R. V.). She now realizes her mistake, and is fully awake and repentant. But she missed the opportunity, and reached the door too late. The myrrh which dropped from her hands speaks of the bitterness of her contrition; but v. 6 shows us that she had taken too long to arise and awake, and the

opportunity for sweet communion in service at that time was lost.

In v. 7 the watchmen represent the ministers or shepherds of the flock. Here they smite and wound the bride, reproaching her for her slothful ease, and telling her she ought to be ashamed of it (taking away her veil). In v. 8 she appeals to the daughters of Jerusalem to assist her in her search, thus testifying before those who are behind her in spiritual experience that she has lost the communion she once had. This humbling of herself to the utmost is not only effectual in arousing the "daughters" to seek a closer walk with God, but it also brings her to the place of restored communion.

In v. 9 the daughters of Jerusalem speak, and in vv. 10-16 the bride answers them by a detailed description of the glories of her Lord. "White and ruddy" speak of perfect health and youth, and also mark Him out as God's Lamb, pure, spotless and sacrificed, shedding His precious blood to redeem us. The word "white" means *dazzling bright,* as in Matt. 17:2; Acts 26:13. Note both the white and red in 1 Peter. 1:18, 19; Rev. 5:6; 19:11-15. The word "chiefest" means one who carries the flag, and is thus conspicuous among all others. Col. 2:15; 2 Cor. 2:14; Psa. 20:5; 45:3, 4. His head and feet are both fine gold, speaking of His perfect Deity. Eph. 1:21-24; Col. 1:16-19; 2:9, 10. It also signifies the perfection of His thoughts and plans for our lives. Isa. 55:8, 9; Psa. 40:5; 139:17, 18. The black hair speaks of the strength and vigor of youth, while the white hair of Rev. 1:14 shows that He has all the experience and maturity of old age. The black hair may refer to His humanity and the

white hair to His eternal Deity. "Bushy" or short hair is a symbol of authority, just as the long hair of the bride is a sign of subjection. 1 Cor. 11:7, 10; Phil. 2:9-11. The dove's eyes mark Him out as filled with the Spirit (John 1:32), and gazing at His bride with all the tenderness and faithfulness of perfect love, even though it is through tears. Luke 22:61. The bed of spices and banks of sweet herbs (R. V.) refer to the attributes and perfections of Jesus, especially under the suffering with which His face was marred for our sakes. Isa. 52:14; Luke 22:64; Mark 14:65. The lips like lilies refer to the *red* lily, a type of perfect health. Luke 4:22; John 7:46. See the Lessons from Lilies in ch. 2:2, and also the Lily Psalms—45, 69 and 80. His hands are as gold rings encircling His loved one. The gold here refers to the perfection of all His works, as well as of His keeping power. Deut. 32:4; John 10:28, 29. "The beryl is a greenish-blue stone which never receives reflection from any other color or shade, but remains unaffected by contact with other things. The beryl set in gold rings seems therefore to represent the absolute perfection of the works of His hands. Nothing can be added to them, nothing taken from them. Psa. 104:24; 111:7, 8; Isa. 28:29; 49:16.

His body like *bright ivory* here and in Psa. 45:8, refers to His spotless humanity, and the blue sapphires covering it to His heavenly nature, the divine love which characterized Him, and the unsearchable riches of glory which are His. The legs as pillars of marble tell of His almighty power to carry His weak, trembling sheep. His neverfailing strength and steadfastness, and His ability to bear away the sins of the

whole world. His feet are the sockets of fine gold, emblem of His perfect Deity. His aspect (R. V.) is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars, with a majesty unmoved by the storms of winter or the heat of summer, unchangingly the same. Heb. 13:8. His mouth is most sweet, for the bride of His love who is close enough to receive His kisses (ch. 1:2). Altogether lovely or "all desires" is the One whom her soul loveth; nothing is left to be desired, He is perfect from head to foot, no greater loveliness nor beauty could be conceived.

As the bride thus pours out her heart's love and worship in this rapturous description of the glories of her Beloved, her companions are constrained to seek Him too, and in ch. 6:1 they ask where they may find Him. In v. 2 she directs them to Him in His garden (John 19:39-41), where His sacred Body was laid amid the spices, and whence He arose triumphant on the third day (ch. 4:6). The Cross and Atonement of Jesus is the only place to which to direct seeking souls. By that atoning sacrifice He *gathered lilies,* or bought His bride to be His own forever. Ch. 2:1, 2; Isa. 53:10, 11. There is a beautiful significance in the name *garden* being applied to the place of Christ's death and burial. It reminds us of the death of a seed in order that fruit may be brought forth. John 12:24-26. Here Christ *feeds,* rejoicing in the fruit of His travail. Rev. 3:20. In v. 3 we see how the bride has come back to the place of sweet communion with her Lord in seeking to lead others to Him. Although He has not yet spoken, she feels the assurance of His constant, undying love flooding her soul, and she exclaims with adoring devotion that she is all His, and

He is all hers. "He feedeth *his flock* (R. V.) among the lilies" shows that she has at last entered into His zeal and passion for souls, and has begun to share His pastoral life, ever caring for the flock.

In vv. 4-10 the Bridegroom speaks, revealing Himself as right by her side, lovingly welcoming her back to the place of sweet communion, without a word of reproach. He once more recites the beauties and perfections of His loved one, which are just the reflection of His perfect comeliness. Tirzah was the beautiful city on a hill which was the capital of some of the Canaanite kings and afterwards of the kings of Israel. 1 Kings 14:17; 15:12, 33; 16:6, 8, 15, 23. Its name means "pleasantness" or "well-pleasing." Matt. 5:14, 16; Eph. 1:6; 2 Cor. 5:9, R. V. The bride of the Lamb is the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, and her characteristics given in Rev. 21:9-27 should be those of every member of the bride. "Terrible as an army" here and in v. 10, refers to the majestic onward march of the company of overcomers. Rev. 17:14; 19:11-16; Ex. 17:15; Psa. 20:5; 60:4; Song 2:4. In v. 5 He refers to her eyes—the loving, trustful look from the Spirit's life in her—and says that they have overcome or "taken Him by storm." See ch. 1:15; 4:1, 9. He cannot refuse to answer the cry of those who are wholly given up to Him. Ex. 32:10; Deut. 9:14, 19.

He then repeats the description of the hair, teeth and temples of His bride. See the meanings of these in ch. 4:1-3, and note how these are the only parts which had been marred or neglected in the time of her slothful ease, and how He finds them now restored.

Verse 8 speaks of "Queens, concubines and virgins," which may mean other companies of redeemed ones at different stages of Christian experience who have not yet gone all the way with Jesus nor become full overcomers, so as to enter into the company which will form the bride. She is spoken of as "but *one*"—a word which means *unified,* or united into one. See John 17:20-23. She is also called "the choice one," which bears a thought of purity, cleansing and polishing. See Mal. 3:3. Note that there is no jealousy nor envy among the different classes of redeemed ones. Though the virgins, queens and concubines have not attained to the purity and separation of the bride, yet they do not envy but only admire her, and v. 10 gives their words of admiration. They are surprised at the wondrous glory they see shining from her, and the majestic advance of the army of overcomers. She is fair as the moon, shining with light reflected from the Sun of righteousness. She is also clear as the sun, for she is *lost in Him,* and His glory only is seen. 1 Cor. 15:41; 2 Cor. 3:18.

III. THE AUTUMN DIVISION

Section 1. Fruits of Recognized Union. ch. 6:11 to 8:4.

The bride speaks in vv. 11, 12 as she goes down to the garden of nuts with her Lord, from now on having unbroken communion with Him in unselfish work for souls. Refer to the "Symbolism of the Song" for the meaning of the vine, pomegranate, etc. In v. 12 she is caught away in the midst of her labor "into the chariots of my princely people" (R. V.). This seems to typify a fresh revelation of the Lord's glory, and of what He can do for His people. Compare the catching

away of Paul in 2 Cor. 12:1-4; Psa. 68:17, 18; Eph. 4:8-16. How beautiful is the *balanced* teaching of this Song: no resting in slothful ease, careless of the needs of lost souls around; and no ceaseless activity, ever working, with no time to wait on the Lord in quiet communion. The bride has been delivered from both of these dangers, and now we see in the maturity of her Christian life (nuts, or *ripened* fruits) how there is the perfect blending of the Martha and the Mary spirit, of activity with contemplation, of labor with repose. She is wholly given up to Him, and working with Him for souls in the garden of nuts; yet ready at any moment to be caught away for a time of quiet communion with Himself.

In v. 13 the daughters of Jerusalem speak, and they call the bride "Shulamite," or daughter of peace, the feminine form of the name Solomon. They are realizing more and more her likeness to Him. They call her to return, for they love to gaze upon her. But she replies: "Why will ye look upon the Shulamite as upon the dance of Mahanaim (R. V.)?" The word Mahanaim means "two hosts" Gen. 32:2. She seems to urge them not to look upon her as being separate from her Lord—not two hosts, but *one*. She tries to direct their attention away from herself to Him, in whose host she desires to be hidden and swallowed up completely.

In ch. 7:1-5 the daughters of Jerusalem speak, describing the beauties of the bride, as they see her working for her Beloved and in constant fellowship with Him. They begin with her feet, which they have found beautiful in carrying the Gospel Isa. 52:7; Rom.

10:15; Eph. 6:15. The joints of the thigh are the most deeply hidden part of the framework of the body, and they are compared to jewels—fit emblem of God's hidden *intercessors* who hold together the members of the Body of Christ. The round goblet filled with wine refers to the inner life filled with the Spirit. Eph. 5:18. The waist like a heap of wheat set about with lilies refers first to her power of ministering *Christ,* the Bread of Life, to those among whom she works; and then to the purity and beauty of His teaching which is like the lilies. The use of words describing the innermost parts of the body teaches us that before we can win souls we must ourselves partake of the glorious salvation of Christ—we must *eat* it until it becomes a very part of us—just as in John 7:38, 39 we see the rivers of the Spirit's fullness flowing from the innermost being of the believer. Note how the *grain* of wheat falls into the ground and dies (John 12:24); and now, after that inner crucifixion with Christ, the bride has a heap *of wheat* with which to satisfy the hungry souls around her. The breastplate of faith and love described in v. 3, and the neck like a tower have already been noticed in ch. 4:4, 5. The eyes like pools represent their deep, quiet stillness. Heshbon means *intelligence.* Bath-rabbim means *the city of a multitude;* and we have here a beautiful picture of the deep, settled peace which the Lord gives His people, even at the very gates of a crowded city, in the midst of the throng. John 17:15-18; Col. 3:3. We are reminded also that it is only the still, quiet water which can truly reflect the sun and sky. Thus the "dove's eyes," speaking of the Spirit's work in the bride, reflect the beauties and

glories of Jesus to the world around. 2 Cor. 3:18.

The nose as the tower of Lebanon represents the bride's attitude towards the world (Damascus). Just as the nose is the organ of scent, so is the gift of discernment in the spiritual. Towards the Bridegroom, the bride is modest and humble, ever clothed and covered with meekness (ch. 4:3; 6:7); but towards the world she is brave, unflinching and alert, ever on the watch, never deceived nor surprised by the enemy, while she abides in her strong tower and the discernment of the Spirit is manifested in her. Prov. 18:10; 1 Cor. 12:10; 14:29, R. V.; 1 John 4:1-3. The head *upon her* may refer to a crown, just as Mount Carmel (which means a fruitful field or mountain garden) is crowned with vegetation, beauty and fertility. See the *crowns* offered to the members of the bride in Rev. 2:10; 1 Thess. 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Peter. 5:4. The hair like purple symbolizes the reigning or overcoming life, as purple is the royal color, composed of blue (heavenly) and scarlet (suffering or sacrifice) 2 Tim. 2:11, 12. "The King is held captive in the tresses thereof" (R. V.). See note on long hair of separation, consecration and submission in ch. 4:1, and note how these long tresses hold the King captive. There was a divine "must" in the whole life of Jesus: yea even before that, all through the ages of eternity that all-powerful love of His for His bride was impelling Him and binding Him, for He is called *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* Rev. 13:8; John 3:14; 4:4; 9:4; 10:16; 12:34; 20:9. See how the joy set before Him (of winning His bride) caused Him to endure. Heb. 12:2; Isa. 53:10, 11.

In vv. 6-9 the Bridegroom speaks, describing once

more the beauties of His bride as she follows on in faithful service for Him. He compares her to a palm tree for uprightness (Jer. 10:5; Psa. 92:12, 15; Isa. 60:21; 61:3) and the "clusters of grapes" refer to the fruitfulness brought forth by her faith and love. 1 Thess. 5:8. This refreshes His soul (Prov. 25:13). He delights to "climb up into the palm tree" (R. V.) and to feed on the fruits of His own Spirit's life in His bride. Psa. 1:3; Jer. 17:7, 8. "The stature of the palm tree is ever straight and upright, reminding us of the singleness of aim spoken of by the apostle when he says: 'This one thing I do.' Phil 3:13. The palm is an evergreen, constantly casting off its old leaves, and ever putting forth new ones. Col. 3:8-10, R. V. It gives food, rest and shelter. John 15:16; Hosea 14:7. It grows in the most unlikely places, in sandy deserts where nothing else can grow. It thrives in the midst of barrenness, dearth and drought, because it strikes its roots ever deeper and deeper into the dry soil, and draws moisture and nourishment from hidden springs, deep down beyond the sight of man. Therefore its life and growth are maintained when there is apparently nothing for it to feed upon; and therefore men who would otherwise perish for lack of food and drink are kept alive and nourished by it. And thus we may flourish, whether we grow by the springs of water, where it is easy to grow, or in the sandy desert where there is no external source of supply, but where, since we are rooted in the Lord Himself, He is able to keep us alive in drought, as He satisfies us from His own secret springs. And not only does the palm tree strike its roots deep down till they reach the water beneath, and so are ever within touch of the source of

life and fruitfulness: it spreads them also far around in every direction, till these out-reaching suckers again take root and spring up in fresh palms. Where there was once but a single tree, a whole family arises. So fruitful and reproductive does the Lord intend us to be, as we grow and spread in Him."

The smell of her breath is like apples, because she has been feasting on Jesus, who is the Apple Tree in ch. 2:3. Her mouth like the best wine refers to the words which the Spirit puts into her lips: these are sweet and precious to Jesus. The words, "for my Beloved" seem to be interjected by the bride herself, while He is describing His enjoyment of her Spirit-filled words. It is as if she would say: "Whatever there is of sweetness in my mouth has all been put there by thee, and it is *all for thee* and thy glory alone." Even the lips of those who are asleep in the natural may show forth His praises as He speaks through them in visions or dreams.

The bride speaks from ch. 7:10 to 8:3; and here we see her at work in the vineyard, enjoying at the same time sweet and precious communion with her Beloved. Compare her statement in v. 10 with the similar ones in ch. 2:16 and 6:3, noting her growth in grace. In the first she is most taken up with what *she* has got. In the second she thinks first of what *He* has got, in possessing her. In the third the fact that He has got her fills her whole vision, and she is entirely taken up with Him and what He desires in her. Compare the "desire" in Gen. 3:16, which is a part of the curse; and note how in the glorious redemption which is in Christ Jesus, the desire of both man and woman (as members of the bride) is to be

entirely yielded and satisfied in HIMSELF, the heavenly Bridegroom. Job. 23:13; Phil. 2:13.

The call in v. 11 is the keynote of the third division of the Song. It is a *Call to United Work*—"Come, my beloved, let us go!" and it comes from the lips of the bride. She has now no separate interests from His: it is always "us" and "we." His vineyard or garden is hers; His plants are hers, His work is hers, His sheep are hers, and she has learned the glorious secret of constant communion with Himself in the midst of the active service. This is the true missionary spirit; and the bride is living no longer for herself but for the salvation of others. 2 Cor. 5:14, 15; John 15:16. As they are working together for the salvation of the lost and the building up of believers (tending the plants), she pours out her heart's love and adoration to Him. The mandrakes are sometimes called "love-apples," and the orientals believed they would produce love and fruitfulness. See Gen. 30:14-17. Note that where there is the fragrance of the mandrakes (the bride's love for her Lord) there are *all manner of pleasant fruits*. So the only fruits that are pleasant to Him are those which are the product of our heart's *love*. We must not only preserve and maintain the early fruits of the Spirit in our characters and lives, but also seek to continually develop *new* ones to lay up for Christ, our Beloved.

In ch. 8:1 she longs that she had known Him as a brother, that she might have spent her whole life with Him, and that she might know the most intimate communion with Him, symbolized by the kiss. See ch. 1:2. In v. 2 she says that in that case she would bring Him into her mother's house (where she was born of

the Spirit), that He might instruct her (R. V.), and would offer to Him the spiced wine and pomegranate juice of His Spirit's work in her. In the mother's house would also be found other members of the redeemed family; we may also see here a reference to her desire that other souls may share His instruction with her. In the Lord's Supper we drink of the spiced wine together, and it is like the betrothal feast which is to us a pledge and foretaste of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. In v. 3 she describes the tenderness of His embrace, and at once rests in it, as she had done previously in ch. 2:6. In v. 4. He again charges the companions that they disturb not her rest in his arms (ch. 2:7; 3:5). Thus ends the first section of Division III.

Section 2. Unrestrained Communion. ch. 8:5-14.

In this, the last section of the Song, we find a blood-washed company coming up from the wilderness,—the church gathered out of all nations,—leaning upon the Beloved, and yet looking for His Coming in glory. He is with His bride in a spiritual sense, and yet she is ever on the watch for something even better—for His visible, bodily presence once more, for His promise to be fulfilled: "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." While the first section of this Autumn Division showed us the bride in sweet communion in the midst of her missionary work for Him, this second section shows us the fruit of the missionary work, and the company of redeemed ones made ready, built up, established in the faith, and ever watching for His Appearing. The daughters of Jerusalem ask the question in v. 5. "Who is this?" We may compare with this the wonder and

surprise of the onlookers at the growth, power and purity of the apostolic church.

The very word *leaning* shows the bride's utter weakness in herself, the loss of all her self-confidence, and her absolute dependence on her Beloved for all things. John 13:23. As the marriage day draws near, she is getting weaker and more dependent—ever more and more weaned from all that is of self or the world, and thus ever stronger in Him whose strength is made perfect in her weakness. Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 12:9-11; 13:4. The Bridegroom speaks to His bride in v. 5, telling her that He *has* been watching over her all through her life (see how she had wished for this in v. 1). He is the Apple Tree (ch. 2:3) under whose shadow she has been and is living; and it was at the Cross where He suffered for her that she first saw the light.

In v. 6 the bride speaks, pleading with her Beloved to unite her even more closely to Himself, binding her to His heart (the place of affection) and to His arm (the place of strength). These are the two places where the high priest of old carried the names of all the tribes. Ex. 28:12, 29; Luke 15:5, 6. Her reason for asking Him to bind her thus closer and ever closer to Himself is that she has learned the weakness and insufficiency of her own human love and strength, and wants to be kept entirely by His mighty power. She has come to an end of herself, and now casts herself with an utter and irrevocable abandonment upon Him for all things. This is the ripeness or the maturity which He has been working out in His bride all through the Song: it is the spirit of the *babe,* and to it alone His deepest mysteries can be revealed. Matt. 11:25. The love of the Almighty One is strong as death;

jealousy (or ardent, burning love) is cruel or relentless as the grave, refusing to let go of those on whom it has taken hold. This is the eternal, never changing love of Jesus for us. John 10:28, 29. The R. V. gives the latter part of this verse correctly: "The flashes thereof are flashes of fire, a very flame of Jehovah." This is the only mention of the NAME of God in the Song, though it is alive with His presence all the way through. For His love as a burning fire see Jer. 20:9; Zech. 2:5; John 2:17.

In v. 7 the Bridegroom replies, assuring His bride of the unchangeableness of His love. The "many waters" of man's sin and ingratitude have flowed over it all through the ages; but, thank God, they have never quenched it. Jer. 31:3; John 13:1; Psa. 69:1, 9, 15. Neither can anything else be accepted in the place of love, either by the Bridegroom or the bride. To both it is the heart-affection of the other that binds and holds. We may bestow all our goods to feed the poor or give our bodies to be burned, but if we do not bring with them our *love* to Jesus, He will utterly contemn (or despise) it. 1 Cor. 13:3.

In v. 8 the bride again speaks, consulting her Beloved as to what is to be done for the "little sister" who is as yet undeveloped and immature. Note that she does not go to other people, pointing out the lack and the defects in her sister, but she goes direct to the Lord in prayer about her. In v. 9 the Lord answers, stating that if the little sister prove to be like a wall, stable and dependable, they will adorn her with a palace or turret of *silver*—the beauties of His redemption work on Calvary. The wall also speaks of protection and separation; and it is the strong, stable,

separated soul who shows forth most brightly the beauties and glories of Christ. Isa. 54:14; 60:1, 2, 13, 18; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; Rev. 21:12-21. But if the sister were like a door—weak, unstable and vacillating—they would have to enclose her with boards of cedar, which typifies the strength and majesty of the manhood of Jesus. Thus she would become a wall: her weakness enclosed and covered by His strength, her instability covered by His eternal steadfastness. Eph. 4:14; Col. 1:23; 2:7; 1 Peter. 5:10.

In vv. 10 to 12 the bride again speaks, with a look of adoring gratitude, praising her Lord that He has made her stable like a wall, and the faith and love already mentioned in ch. 4:5 and 7:3 were like the turrets adorning it. While these twin graces are the *first* activities of the soul towards Christ, they are also the *last,* and they are the signs of maturity. The frequent mention of the breasts of the bride in the Song may remind us of the importance of being able to feed and nourish the "babes in Christ." As our faith and love to Him increase, we shall be able to supply them with the "sincere milk of the word," so that they may grow up into Him in all things. But let us ever remember that the milk is *His,* nothing of ourselves, but His pure word; and it is by simple faith that we acquire it for them.

The bride describes herself here as "one that found peace," referring to her previous lost condition of turmoil, tumult, storm and misery; and then to the twofold rest which Jesus has brought her: peace *with* God, and the peace *of* God. She then speaks of her Lord's vineyard at Baal-hamon (Lord of riches, or a multitude), which refers to the fullness of the Gentiles, or

the great multitudes which are to be gathered unto Him. Rev. 7:9; Matt. 21:33-43. The keepers or ministers were to have their portion (1 Cor. 9:13, 14), and the Lord was to have His. When Jesus applied the parable of the vineyard to the Jewish nation, they had been unfaithful in giving God His portion, and so the vineyard was given to the Gentiles. Matt. 21:43. But in v. 12 the bride applies the vineyard to her own individual life and work for the Lord, and determines to be faithful in giving the Master His dues.

In v. 13 the Bridegroom speaks from the mountains of spices where He has gone for a time, and reminds His bride that in the midst of her busy, faithful work for Him she must be constantly causing HIM to hear her voice. Not only must she speak to her companions *about* Him, but she must take time to be in the secret place alone with Himself, and to speak *to* Him. She is to dwell "in the gardens," or the place of missionary labor, not on any slothful bed of ease, and yet all the time her heart is to be tuned to the absent Lord and ever ready to listen to His voice and commune with Him. These are the last words of the Bridegroom in this wonderful Song: "CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY VOICE." And in v. 14 the bride replies, the Spirit in her saying, "Come, Lord Jesus!" Rev. 22:17, 20. For the meaning of the roe or young hart see note on ch. 2:7. These two last verses show us what the attitude of the waiting bride should be in these "last days" before His Coming: ever giving out His Word to her companions and working for Him, living in communion with Him in His life of intercession, her eyes looking ever upward as she walks in a pathway of holiness and separation unto Himself, and constantly prays for His Appearing.

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